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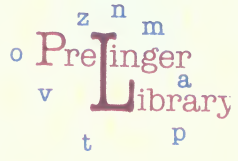

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"*The Story of our Lives from Year to Year.*"—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A Weekly Journal.

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

NEW SERIES.

VOLUME VII.

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THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER FOR 1871,

SLAVES OF THE LAMP,

WILL BE FOUND AT THE END OF THE VOLUME.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

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"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 157. NEW SERIES. | SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1871. | PRICE TWOPENCE.

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I. FATHER AND SON.

THE revelation made by Mrs. Entwistle to her nephew had a twofold effect upon Gerald's mind. He was of course filled with joy at the discovery that his belief in his mother's innocence was well founded, but this joy was dashed with keen regret at the thought that the woman to whom he owed so much had acted so wickedly towards her sister; and that, even at the time of her narration, she did not express, and probably did not feel, the slightest remorse for the crime she had committed, and the misery which she had brought about. A great difficulty presented itself to the young man. He felt it to be of paramount importance that his mother's memory should be at once freed from the stain which, as his father believed, had so long rested upon it, and that though reparation was of course impossible, Sir Geoffry might be able to recal the associations of his married life without regret, and to believe in the asseverations of her innocence which his wife had made on parting from him.

To bring about this result successfully would, however, be no easy matter. In the first place, Gerald knew that Mrs. Entwistle's state of health was such as to render her extremely susceptible to any sudden emotion; and he dreaded the effect which the expression of his determination to reveal to his father the real state of the circumstances regarding Mr. Yeldham, and the error under which that unfortunate man's life had been sacrificed, might have upon her. Then again, even supposing that he were enabled to break his intention to Mrs. Entwistle, without causing her much suffering, and to obtain her consent to the steps which he proposed to take, Gerald felt more than doubtful of the reception he might meet with at his father's hands. Even with his small experience of Sir Geoffry's temper, Gerald felt it probable that the old general would not merely discredit the information which his son sought to convey to him, but that he would possibly regard the whole affair as a scheme concocted by Gerald, with a view to his reinstatement in his position as his father's heir. However, the young man had made up his mind that the difficulties, of whatever nature they might happen to be, must be surmounted; and when he rose on the morning after Mrs. Entwistle's confession, it was with the full determination of taking prompt action towards the vindication of his mother's memory, even though his aunt might choose to withhold the consent which he intended to ask of her.

Whatever effect the narration of those dark passages in her early career may have had upon Mrs. Entwistle, she had herself sufficiently under control to prevent the manifestation of any outward sign; and when Gerald entered her boudoir, he found her lying on her sofa, in her usual position by the window, and in her usual state. She received him with her ordinary affectionate greeting; asked of his intended movements for the day, and chatted on indifferent topics, never making the smallest allusion to the occurrences of the previous evening, even when Gerald inquired, with what he intended to be special emphasis, after her health.

"I feel just as usual, my dear boy," she said, with a faint smile, "and if I continue

as I am now, I shall almost bring myself to believe that Doctor Asprey is wrong, and that I, as it were, exist upon my illness. That was a sharp attack that I had last night, but it seems to have left no special ill effect behind it, as I am in my normal state of lassitude and weariness."

"Even that is good hearing," said Gerald, "for I was prepared to find you a prisoner to your room, and I had something particular to say to you."

"Again," cried the invalid, with uplifted eyebrows and a quaint expression of horror in her face. "Oh, for the happy days, when we had no mysterious communications to make to one another. I begin to feel myself like a modernised Mrs. Radcliffe, and expect to find trap-doors in the library floor, and see sheeted spectres gibbering in the park."

"You will readily understand what I have to ask you," said Gerald. "I need not enter into the details of the quarrel between father and son. I may simply say that it arose from my obedience to an obligation laid on me by my mother on her deathbed, and——"

"Is it positively necessary, my dear boy, that we should enter into these family matters?" asked the invalid, querulously.

"It is," said Gerald, "in so much as that in his conduct to me, as in every act of his life subsequent to his parting from my mother, Sir Geoffry has been guided by a belief in his wife's misconduct, if not actual shame. It is necessary that he should be enlightened on that matter, and that the truth should be told to him."

"Gerald," cried Mrs. Entwistle, with an ineffectual struggle to raise herself on her couch, "you would not betray me?"

"I would vindicate the memory of the dead," said Gerald.

"But at my expense. Wait till I am gone, my dear boy; you will not have to postpone your explanation long, and—and my views have somewhat altered since last night."

"You wish you had not told me this story," said he, bending over her and taking her hand.

"With all my soul I wish it," said Mrs. Entwistle, earnestly. "It is natural enough and to be expected, of course, but your manner seems changed and different towards me this morning. And I—I have been, and am so fond of you."

"But she was my mother," said Gerald, sadly. "Ah, you will not leave her memory with this stain upon it! I am, I know, the only person in the world whose affection you care for, and God knows it is not for me, owing as I do almost everything to your kindness, to sit in judgment on matters which took place almost before my existence. Your conduct to her has been atoned by your conduct to me, and if my father lost his wife through your acts, I have found a second mother in you."

As he said these words he bent over the couch, and kissed the wan cheeks, down which the tears were coursing. Then he continued: "But you will not refuse to make reparation by letting me see my father to clear his mind of the groundless suspicion which has so long possessed him, and of showing how harshly his wife was treated by him."

"I should not object to that," said Mrs. Entwistle, with something of the old sarcastic ring in her voice. "Major Heriot never appreciated my sister, and, even in his most devoted days, treated her with a frigid courtesy which would have led any woman with a little spirit to hate him."

"You will not object, then, to my seeing Sir Geoffry, and acquainting him with what you told me last night?"

"You must do as you will," said the invalid, wearily; "but a very short time, and I shall be beyond the influence of his wrath, however violent it may be."

So the concession was granted, though unwillingly, and Gerald determined to go down to Springside, where he had ascertained that his father was residing, and make an effort to see him. He was sufficiently acquainted with the violence of Sir Geoffry's temper to appreciate fully the difficulty of his task, and he allowed to himself that, even if he succeeded in obtaining admission into his father's presence, he would yet be far from attaining the object of his visit. Once admitted to an audience, much doubtless rested with him, and his success would greatly depend on his power of holding himself in check, and rendering himself invulnerable to the taunts, and worse than taunts, with which he was likely to be greeted. Looking at the motives which influenced him, the restitution of his mother's good name, and the reparation of the wrong which had been done to her during her lifetime, and to her memory since her death, the young man felt that he would be enabled to fulfil his self-imposed task in the spirit in which he had conceived it. It would be a difficult task no doubt, but it should be undertaken in a proper spirit, and would, he hoped, be carried out successfully.

Gerald did not purpose going to Springside until next morning. He did not think it would be kind to leave Mrs. Entwistle until he had seen whether the access of illness, which had induced her to send for Doctor Asprey, gave any signs of reappearance, and, moreover, he had something else to do that morning. Something particular, apparently, so attentive was he to a second toilet, which he seemed to think it necessary to perform after quitting his aunt's presence, and at the conclusion of which he left the house and struck across the park towards Kensington Gardens.

The broad walk, which had been lately filled with fashionable promenaders, was now almost deserted, and the turfy paths of the long green alleys were already dotted with freshly fallen leaves. In many spots the grass had been worn away entirely, in more it was brown, brittle, and stubbly; the leaves lay where they fell, being not yet sufficiently numerous, in the gardener's opinion, to be worth the trouble of collection. The children usually found there, taking in the best imitation of fresh air under the circumstances, had gone to the seaside, accompanied by their nursemaids, and even the shabby-genteel people, whose business in life seems to be to sit on the extreme edges of the seats and eat captains' biscuits, had forsaken their haunts. Struck by the contrast between the gaiety which the scene had presented on the last occasion of his visiting it, and the desolation which then characterised it, Gerald Hardinge stopped and looked round, then, with a shiver, was turning away, when he caught sight of a figure, with its back towards him, some little distance off.

A female figure, trim, neat, and lissome, strolling along with somewhat languid steps, and idly pushing up the grass with her parasol. Just the sort of figure to induce a wish to see the face belonging to it. No wonder, then, that Gerald Hardinge, after a minute's hesitation, started in pursuit.

"I'm going blind, I fancy," he said to himself, as he hurried along. "It was by the merest chance that I saw her, and yet I felt certain she would not neglect my summons. How wonderfully graceful she is; how much improved since the old days!"

The next moment he had gained the lady's side. She gave a little cry as he stood suddenly before her, hat in hand. She had been startled by his appearance, and the colour flushed up into her cheeks. It was Rose Pierrepoint, with her promise of delicate beauty developed and matured, and with the bloom of health and quiet content in place of the anxious, irritable expression which her face formerly wore.

"You startled me, Mr. Gerald," she said, with a half-laugh. "You came so quietly behind me on the grass that I did not hear you."

"But you expected me, Rose?"

"Oh yes; but at the moment I was thinking of—something else."

"You are as candid as ever."

"You would not have me otherwise, Mr. Gerald?"

"Certainly not. Equally certainly I will not have you call me Mr. Gerald."

"What would Mrs. Entwistle think if she heard me call you anything else?"

"Mrs. Entwistle is not here. What made you refer to her?"

"I don't know; she came into my head."

"I notice she always does come into your head, or, at least, you always allude to her, whenever you are annoyed. You did not like Mrs. Entwistle, Rose?"

"I did not take any violent fancy to her."

"So I was sorry to see."

"Were you? Well, then, if it will please you, I will take a violent fancy to her, Mr.—I mean, Gerald."

"Don't be absurd, Rose; you are in one of your teasing humours, which always provoke me."

"Then you should not have written to me to meet you at so short a notice, and come upon me so suddenly when you arrived. It was lucky your letter found me, as I might have started off for my holiday."

"I knew you would not go without letting me know, and giving me the chance of saying good-bye. Rose, can you be serious for a minute?"

There was something in his tone which caused her to put off her light laughing manner in an instant. "Of course I can, Gerald," she said, earnestly. "If my nonsense pains you I——"

"You know there is nothing I love to listen to so much," interrupted Gerald; "but just now I have something in downright sober earnest to say to you, my child. You have known me, little Rose, in two very different positions in life."

"Yes," said Rose, rather sadly; "long ago, when you were a scene-painter; now, when you are a—a swell."

"Yes; you fancy that I have returned to

my family, but it is not so. Mrs. Entwistle is my aunt, it is true, but I have yet living a father, who has discarded me."

"Discarded you, Gerald—for what?"

"Principally for siding with my mother, with whom also he had quarrelled, believing she had deceived him. It has just been my fortune to discover that his suspicions of my mother were utterly unfounded, and I am going to him to-morrow to prove this to him."

"Coming on such an errand he will be sure to welcome you and take you back into favour, Gerald," said Rose, with yet a touch of sadness in her voice.

"I am by no means so sure of that. If he does, well and good. I will ask nothing of him but his recognition and his name."

"What is his name, Gerald?"

"That you shall not know, little Rose, until I have seen him. Curious, too, that you should ask, as it is a matter in which you may be interested."

"I, Gerald? How?"

"Surely you must know! Surely long ere this your heart must have told you how dear you are to me, Rose. Will you not answer me?" he said, taking her hand and passing it lightly through his arm.

"I—I—I thought you liked me, Gerald," said the girl, looking down.

"Liked you!" he echoed, with a laugh. "I like you so much that I am going to ask you to be my wife, to share my fortunes, and to take my name when," he added, with a touch of bitterness, "when it is decided under what name the remainder of my life is to be passed! What answer do you give me, Rose?"

She gave him none, beyond what was conveyed in the momentary upward glance of her large eyes, and in the slight pressure from the little hand that trembled on his arm. It was, however, apparently enough for Gerald, who, after glancing hastily round to see that there were no observers within sight, bent down and touched her forehead with his lips.

"Thank you, dearest one," he said. "You are taking a leap in the dark, and have not the least idea what fate may be in store for you. But, whatever it is, I shall be by your side to share its troubles. Another twenty-four hours will determine whether I am to remain an outcast under a false name, or to resume my position as my father's son."

"You are determined, then, to see your father, Gerald?"

"I am. It is my duty to tell him what I have heard, and to endeavour to satisfy him of its truth. Whether I fail in this, or whether I succeed, all I should ask of him would be the permission to bear his name. I want no money from him. I would take none."

"Then if your father is still obdurate against you, Gerald, you will go on living as you have done lately?"

"Not entirely, little Rose. In the first place, I shall have you with me, and in the next I am determined to shake off this laziness under which I have so long been labouring, and to work for my living."

"That's good hearing, Gerald," said the girl, looking up delightedly at him. "What you said last, I mean," she added, noticing the smile upon his face; "though I don't mean to deny that to become your wife will be the fulfilment of my dream of happiness."

"It is very sweet of you to make such a confession. How long have you had this dream, Rose?"

"Almost all my life, it seems to me. It began I think in the old days at Wexeter, when you used to give me drawing lessons in Miss Cave's lodgings. You recollect Wexeter, Gerald, and Madge?"

"Yes," he said, "of course I recollect Madge well."

"I was almost jealous of Madge once, I remember. I used to think you liked her, Gerald, but that of course was absurd. Poor darling Madge, how surprised she will be at what I have to tell her! I shall write to her directly I get home."

"I think you had better leave it until you can tell her something more definite, dearest," said Gerald. "By to-morrow night I shall know what effect the communication I have to make to you will have upon my father, and you can then write more fully as to your future to your sister. Now talk to me about yourself."

The approach of autumn, which strikes with dismay the inhabitants of most watering-places, whether inland or on the coast, is regarded very calmly by the dwellers in Springside, for to those who have been prudent enough to invest their savings in lodging-houses in that favourite spot, there is no portion of the year which does not bring its due amount of profit and gain. When the summer is over, and the London families, who have been making a holiday sojourn in the city of springs, return to the city of smuts, the Springsidites view the departure of their visitors with perfect composure. They know that after a very short interval, just long enough for

them to go through the process of a "thorough clean up," and the substitution of winter for summer furniture, their lodgings will be again filled, and this time by a class of tenant, rich, valetudinarian, and certain to remain for many weeks. This interval, however, though made much of by those who take advantage of it for the performance of necessary labour, is generally voted desperately dull by the better class of inhabitants, most of whom try to make their escape to more congenial places. Sir Geoffry, in particular, very much resented the state of affairs at this dull season of the year. Most of his club cronies were away; it was next to impossible to get up a rubber; and even the few friends admitted to the intimacy of Wheatcroft, were among the defaulters. Cleethorpe was shooting in Scotland, and Mr. Drage had gone over to attend a church congress, which was being held at Bircester. Sir Geoffry could have put up with all of this if Mrs. Pickering had been at home to talk with and read to him, but she had asked for a few days' holiday, and of course he had not dreamed of refusing her.

The instant she was gone, the old general felt her loss. There was a letter from Irving—a long letter—full of business, which he would have liked to submit to her consideration, and in which he would not stir without her advice. He had grown accustomed to consult his housekeeper in almost everything, and to place great reliance on her judgment.

"A wonderful woman, sir!" Sir Geoffry said of Mrs. Pickering to his friend Cleethorpe, just before the gallant captain started for his shooting-box in the Highlands. "A wonderful woman! Most women have a knack of hitting the right nail on the head, but this they do by accident, by intuition, as it is called, and can never tell you why! Now, Mrs. Pickering is always right, and can always give you her reason for being so. You did me an immense service, sir, when you persuaded that lady to undertake the management of my household."

But Mrs. Pickering was gone, and had taken her judgment with her, and Sir Geoffry was left alone, to use strong language at his loneliness and the dreariness of his house, and to render the lives of his servants almost insupportable, by the variety of his orders and the caprices of his querulous temper.

On the second night after Madge's departure, just at the time that she was entering the grounds at Hollycombe, Sir Geoffry was seated at the window of the dining-room, looking out into the garden, and wondering what he should do if chance ever removed Mrs. Pickering from his service. The mere idea of such a contingency made him hot with vexation; it was not like the same place without her, and nothing seemed to go on rightly in her absence.

"And yet," said the old general to himself, "and yet I'm likely to lose her at any moment. She's a young woman still, and a handsome woman, and attractive in every way, and is certain to be picked up sooner or later. If I were a younger man myself I should be too glad of such a wife; and of course there are hundreds who have the same idea. Perhaps at this very moment there is some confounded fellow talking to her, and making up his mind that he'll ask her to marry him. What's that?"

He started, and, shading his eyes with his hand, peered out into the gloaming.

"I could have sworn I saw a figure," he said, turning back into the room, "but there is nothing there. I'm nervous to-night, and shall set the doctor's warning at defiance, and take a glass or two of port. Absurd to think that a man of my figure, without any hereditary tendency to gout, should——"

He stopped, attracted by the noise made by the opening of the door, and looked in that direction. He saw the door open, and a man's figure enter the room and advance quickly towards him. For an instant the old general thought he was attacked, and his hand closed upon the neck of the decanter he was lifting from the sideboard, as his handiest weapon of defence.

The figure, however, stood upright and motionless before him. As far as he could make out in the dull uncertain light it was that of a tall, well-knit young man, with a full and flowing beard.

Sir Geoffry eyed it for a moment in silence, then he said: "Who are you, and what is your business here, sir?"

"I want to see you," was the reply; but no sooner did the old general hear the tones of the voice from which it was uttered, than he relaxed his hold of the decanter, and stepping a pace forward, waved his hand toward the door.

"I know you now!" he cried, in loud and angry tones; "I cannot discern your features, but I recognise your voice! How dare you insult me by your presence? Leave the house at once!"

"Father," said the young man, submissively.

"I have forbidden you ever to use that word to me," cried Sir Geoffry. "To what am I indebted, sir, for the honour of this visit? The last time I saw you, you were full of your great career, and swaggered about not touching the money which was your due. I presume that delusion is at an end, and that you have come to claim your rights?"

"I have," said Gerald, "but not in the way that you imagine. I have come to claim my right to be regarded as your son; my mother's right to atonement for the grievous wrong you did to her while living, and which you have continued to her memory! Oh, sir, I told you I would make it the business of my life to discover the real story of Mr. Yeldham's acquaintance with my mother, and to prove to you that your jealous fears of her were groundless. I can prove all this to you now; I have come here to do so!"

"It is a lie!" cried the old man, stretching out his hands, and trembling with passion. "You have come here because your funds are exhausted, and your creditors refuse to trust you further! You can have the money, sir; it is yours by right; there is no occasion for you to descend to such paltry subterfuge."

"Father, I implore——"

"I insist, sir, upon your discontinuing to address me in that manner," said the old man, ringing the bell. "Make your application to me in a business way, through a lawyer, and it shall be attended to. Riley!" he cried to the servant, who appeared at the door, "what were you doing to permit this person to make his way into my presence? Show him out instantly, and never give him admittance here again."

Gerald looked as if he would have spoken, but the old servant touched him on the shoulder, and sorrowfully preceded him out of the room.

TAMMANY CHIEFS.

The city of New York at this moment is the scene of a remarkable struggle between the people and what was a few short months ago the strongest, and most absolutely irresponsible government in the world. The great and sumptuous city, spreading its wealth over the heights of Brooklyn and the marshes of New Jersey, grasping in its rich embrace the opposite shores of the rivers which enclose the famous island of Manhattan, has been for years prostrate at the feet of a municipal government, despotic as the Venetian oligarchy, mysterious as the Vehmgericht, corrupt as the College of Cardinals in the worst days of papal misrule. Deriving its power from the immediate suffrages of the sovereign people, submitting every autumn at the elections either for the mayoralty, shrievalty, commissionerships, or judgeships, its party ticket to the approval of the public, invariably victorious over all its enemies by such overwhelming majorities as to render opposition almost ridiculous, the city government apparently contained all the elements of solidity and permanence. It is true that an intelligent minority existed, but the intelligence, wealth, and respectability of the great city has ever shown itself lamentably apathetic on municipal and, indeed, on all political questions. During a long residence in New York, the writer was often astonished at the constant and utter indifference to every subject of local administration displayed by the prominent citizens and great merchants. The answer invariably vouchsafed to all his queries was, "The whole thing was a dirty business—too filthy for a gentleman to touch; far better to let things alone, bad as they were!"

"You see," continued a thoroughly representative New Yorker, "the rascals who are in power now are gorged with plunder; they have the most palatial residences, the most gorgeous furniture. They drive the fastest horses, smoke the largest cigars, drink the dearest brands of wine, wear the biggest diamonds on the dirtiest hands, and eat—with their knives—the best dinners in the city. They have every temptation (though I admit they very seldom yield to it) to act decently, and rob moderately, and we must admit that what they steal with one hand they scatter freely with the other. Now, suppose for one moment that we were rid of these, and a fresh lot came into power, the new men would all be like greedy cormorants. They would have everything to get, do you see? whereas our present scoundrels have got it all. I guess we should only change the whips of Tammany for the scorpions of a new and famished crowd."

This gentleman by no means stood alone in his sentiments, and his remarks may be taken as a very fair expression of the prevailing opinion of what the Americans are pleased to call Uppertendom. The strong interest in local politics which forms so large a portion of every-day life in England, appeared to be utterly lost in a sensation of total and complete helplessness.

"What is the use of my voting at all?" said a graduate of Harvard, "when the last wild Irishman—imported, perhaps, not more than a month ago, and duly invested with all the rights of citizenship by fraudulent naturalisation papers—can walk down to the polls and neutralise my vote? It is of no use, sir. The educated classes in this city do not stand a chance against the illiterate mass of adopted citizens; they just hang together and carry everything before them, so that a white man, unless he can boast an O or a Mac in front of his name, has no more chance of occupying the smallest position than a nigger."

The wide prevalence of such doctrines as these, and the complete lapse of Upperten-dom into pococurantism, bore the fruit that might have been expected, and the whole patronage of the city, and the entire administration of the city revenues, fell into the hands of the remarkable institution holding its head-quarters at Tammany Hall. The hall, a huge building surmounted by a stone effigy of a colossal Indian, is situate in Fourteenth-street, in the very centre of New York, and here the chiefs of Tammany were wont to meet and decide on the campaign tactics of the democratic party.

It may, perhaps, be well to remind the English reader that the democratic is the conservative party in America, as opposed to the republican, black republican, or abolitionist party, now victorious so far as the central government of the United States is concerned. The democrats, however, have in many cases retained great local power, and are distinguished by their steady adherence to the old-fashioned doctrine of federalism, and the steady maintenance of the obsolete principle of states' rights, a theory propounding the absolute independence and separate sovereignty of each individual state. These doctrines were pretty well knocked on the head during the "late misunderstanding," as the great American war is sometimes designated, but they are still fondly cherished in the democratic bosom, and in few parts of America have the democrats so long held the reins of power as in the city of New York.

This party is in no slight degree indebted for the continuance of its power to the ever-increasing element of Irish immigration. Every Hibernian is almost, immediately on his arrival, pounced upon by "the boys," christened a good democrat, and made, by hook or by crock, a naturalised citizen at once. Should the youth be gifted with a finer natural taste for drinking and fighting than for work, he, in course of time, becomes drafted into the ranks of the "shoulder-hitters" and "repeaters," or, in plain English, of those gentry who carry to a sublime point their obedience to the precept, "Vote early, and vote often," and, voting themselves in half a dozen different wards during the day, by their ruffianly demeanour very effectually deter more peaceful citizens from recording their votes at all.

To these may be added the army of roughs, generally the keepers of low ginshops, gaming-houses, and the professional thieves, their friends, admirers, and accomplices. The latter, during the leisure hours they can spare from the exercise of their regular profession, devote themselves vigorously to the pursuit of politics and whisky, and many a rascal owes his escape from justice to the partial feeling of a judge, in whose election the thief or some of his friends had taken a prominent part.

Inquiring one day of a worthy merchant, a man of substance, if he knew anything of a sprightly young fellow, who appeared to know everybody, this gentleman gave me the following astounding reply:

"Don't know exactly—guess he is a gambler or a politician!"

The order wherein the several professions were named, gives a correct idea of the public feeling towards the two classes of adventurers.

A certain amount of chivalry is very absurdly supposed to attach to the "sport" or gambler by profession; his duties are arduous, his expenses enormous, he is frequently a large speculator in stocks and real estate, and from a hail-fellow-well-met point of view, is considered a better sort of fellow than a "one-horse" politician. The more fashionable dress and more polished manners of the "sport," also help to maintain his superiority; he often happens to have been, at some remote period, a gentleman, and, although often "broke," and very much "shattered" in health and reputation, he still retains some slight traces of his old mode of life; while the rising politician is often that most unhappy of wretches, a "cad," trying his best to appear a gentleman, and finding the purple and fine linen of newly acquired wealth and importance sit as ill on him as did the mantle in the old ballad on the shoulders of those dames whose reputation was not above scandal.

The low estimate accorded to their craft by the public, is not unfrequently a matter

of jest among the politicians themselves. A short time since two of these worthies were dining together at the Hoffmann House, when, one wishing to "take a rise" out of his friend, began:

"Say, Tom, what have you been doing to the press? These fellows are calling you more names than would fill a dictionary!"

"Oh!" replied the other, "I don't mind; in fact, rather like it! Why only the other day one of the papers compared me to Judas Iscariot" (Eye-scariot he pronounced it), "but I didn't mind!"

"No," rejoined his friend, kindly; "*you* didn't mind, of course, but—but how about Judas?"

The fashionable season of New York extends from November to Lent, and during this period a vast number of public balls on a huge scale are organised on various pretences. The Charity Ball, where two years ago Prince Arthur was the centre of attraction, is by far the most fashionable public ball of the season, and the élite of the city fail not to muster in great force; bright gems and brighter eyes may be counted, not in hundreds but in thousands. Next perhaps in importance is the ball of the Americus Club, an institution of the Tammany "stripe" of politics. At this monster gathering the display of diamonds is perfectly marvellous, the extravagant toilets provoke remark even in the city of extravagant expenditure, and among the most prominent guests are, or were, the chiefs of Tammany.

Conspicuous among these is a largely framed man, "with brawny shoulders four foot square;" huge, heavy-looking, but muscular withal; of ungainly aspect as to his limbs, labouring under an unfortunate incapability of finding gloves large enough, or boots creaseless enough, to encompass his vast extremities, but exulting in a deep chest heaving beneath a snowy expanse of linen decorated with an immense diamond solitaire. Surmounting this ungainly body is a massive head crowned with grizzled locks. From beneath a pair of bushy eyebrows gleam bright but sunken eyes, while a heavy beard, streaked with silver, conceals the massive jaw and determined chin. This man is indeed a man of mark, the object of many greetings and hand-shakings, friendly and servile, for he is a leader of men; his word is law, his smile is wealth, his frown ruin; he is the great chief, the Grand Sachem of Tammany, the Boss of the Ring.

At the outset of life a chair-maker on no very ambitious scale, nursed in the old volunteer fire department, an intensely political and slightly rowdy organisation, step by step from foreman of his engine onward and ever onward, higher and still higher, by ways straight or crooked, unaided except by his own quiet determination and iron will, has this man climbed to his present position. Ostensibly a mere commissioner of works, but really a civic Warwick—a municipal king-maker—he sets up and pulls down mayors, chamberlains, comptrollers, collectors. Ever near the great sun of the Tammany system is the quiet and unobtrusive man who enjoys the reputation of supplying intellect to the ruling body. This new Carnot, rejoicing in the initials of Peter B., is dubbed by his friends and foes—Peter Bismarck or Peter Brains Sweeny. He is the great initiator of the policy of pseudo-purity, bogus liberality, and judicious disinterestedness. He is ever preaching to his more voracious colleagues one invariable doctrine, "Gentlemen, we must disgorge." Throwing a sop to Cerberus has ever been his leading idea, and when city chamberlain, he at once turned over to the city treasury a huge amount of interest invariably engulfed by preceding chamberlains. His policy was a sound one, and it redounds somewhat to his credit, that, having "got" enough, he was prepared to "run straight" if the rest of the Ring would have allowed him to do so.

Chatting to a bevy of fashionably-dressed ladies stands Slippery Dick, one of the most popular and best-abused men in Gotham. Slippery or not, Dick has managed to accumulate a huge fortune, and knows right well how to enjoy it. Very late in arrival, and very early in departure; last in the battle, and first in the retreat; is a slender, dapper-looking gentleman, happy in the possession of an elegantly trimmed beard, and taking pride in the "nice conduct" of an eye-glass. His step is light and springy, his hand ever ready to greet his innumerable friends; he is admirably "fixed" in the bluest of blue "clawhammer" coats, the whitest of vests, and the brightest of all possible brass buttons. With jaunty self-possession, with bright glance overflowing with genial good humour, he moves briskly among the throng, feeling quite at home, and why not? for he is, municipally speaking, the "biggest man" there, and rules, or rather seems to rule, the city according to his own good pleasure. Originally a smart lawyer, then

combining that profession with the ardent pursuit of politics and occasional excursions into the realms of literature, pleading causes, addressing "fellow-citizens," and editing the New York Leader by turns, he has made his way with very tolerable rapidity to the highest municipal position attainable. Like Warren Hastings and other great men, the mayor of New York is addicted to the composition of feeble verses; but what is this one small speck upon the face of an "ancillary planet?"

The city judges, some of whom correspond in position with our stipendiary magistrates, are in great force. One genial gentleman is accused on all hands of being kept by the managers or mismanagers of the Erie Railway; near him, gossiping with the gayest group in the house, is the plucky little judge, "Gunny," who has earned immense renown by actually daring to inflict severe sentences on several prominent malefactors. The mere fact of a judge being praised to the skies for doing his simple duty, affords a singular comment on the general administration of justice. Imagine Sir Thomas Henry being complimented in the Times, and compared to Chief Justice Gascoigne, for daring to commit Mr. William Sikes for trial!

Talking in a low tone, and earnestly, to the "Thunderbolt" of the Sixth Ward, a mountain of a man, resplendent in new broadcloth, broad smiles, and the inevitable diamonds, is a tall handsome man, not only better-looking, but more gentleman-like than most of the greater chiefs. He was formerly—but a few years ago—a clerk in the house of A. T. Stewart, but plunging into the sea of politics his talents have brought him to the top of the wave. Enthusiastic admirers predict his certain election at the next contest for the mayoralty.

But there is a buzz of excitement. Mrs. Mushroom's diamonds have just arrived. Every one is excited to a violent pitch; all crowd to obtain a glimpse of the diamonds. Mrs. Mushroom arrives leaning on her husband's arm. She is a showy-looking lady, with a great deal of fair hair more or less authentic. Her toilet is a marvel; heavy satins and priceless laces struggle for pre-eminence; her panier is the biggest, her train the longest in the room. But the diamonds—oh, the diamonds! they blaze and glitter, twinkle and dazzle, raising, meanwhile, storms of envy, hatred, malice, and uncharitableness in the bosoms of fair spectators. One of these last whispers confidentially:

"She is heavy on diamonds now, but Mushroom once kept a gambling-house in 'Frisco, and has committed, I guess, about every crime that wasn't out of his reach."

Such is the rage of the celestial soul of woman at the sight of unattainable jewels.

There is only one slight drawback to these gigantic balls; it is clearly impossible to dance, unless a waltz on the area of an ordinary chess-board can be denominated dancing. But many who come to dance remain to drink, and at one of these balls my evil star led me among a knot of well-known politicians. These were men known to everybody in New York, men whom every one called by their Christian names. Of course the champagne flowed freely: it always is flowing freely on some pretence or other in Gotham. Equally as a matter of course, every man was formally introduced to all the rest, hands were very profusely shaken, and names went very much in at one ear and out at the other. It was a jolly, an excessively jolly party. Among the lively crowd was one gentleman conspicuous by the bravery of his apparel. Faultlessly, too faultlessly dressed, booted and gloved to perfection, oiled, curled, waxed, and gummed within an inch of his life, he was the very beau ideal of a New York dandy. The diamonds of this Adonis were enormous and his thirst prodigious. Suddenly this thing of beauty asserted his intention of depriving the assembly of the light of his presence. Addressing the little knot of revellers, and noticing some rather noisy proceedings in another corner of the room, Adonis opened his mouth and said with fine aristocratic disdain:

"I guess this thing is getting rayther mixed—I shall go." And with many affectionate farewells the elegant hero was suffered to depart. An inquiry touching the identity of the exclusive gentleman elicited the following reply: "You don't know *him?* I guess you don't know enough to go in-doors when it rains. That's the eminent forger, S., just out on bail!"

It may easily be imagined that a society striking its roots so deeply into the slough of the city, and not disdaining even the state prison as a nursery of voters, must be powerful indeed. Marshalled by old tacticians, veterans of many a meeting, men deeply learned in all the mysteries of axe-grinding, log-rolling, and wire-pulling, electing the very judges themselves, it is not to be wondered at that the forces of Tammany have so long proved irresistible. As Napoleon held his artillery in his hand, "comme un coup de pistolet," as Mr. Seward during the civil war boasted that the

liberty of every citizen was at the mercy of his "little bell," even so did the Grand Sachem of Tammany rule the minor slaves of the Ring.

The treachery of a discontented confederate has at last laid bare to the world the history of the most extraordinary system of fraud and spoliation that blots the page of history, and the eyes of Europe are now anxiously watching the efforts of the inhabitants of the Empire City to free themselves from the thraldom of the fatal Ring, which has so long enclosed them in its circle of corruption.

DESIGN OR DEVELOPMENT?

In many parts of France the walks and alleys in parks and gardens are merely the natural loam beaten hard, sometimes mixed or coated over with road scrapings. In wet weather this forms a sticky, slippery surface, so inconvenient as to lead to the insertion of a line of small flags or stepping-stones along the principal walks, to render the passage along them possible after heavy rains. But in hot dry seasons they become hard and smooth, attaining the consistency of a compact stucco. In this state, their only defect is a tendency to cracking; but as the cracks are never wide nor deep enough to serve as pitfalls to the smallest babe, the fault offends the eye rather than the foot of those who walk upon them.

Besides the cracks, these plaster-like walks are often perforated with holes, out of which earth has been thrown by some agent within. By watching a hole, you will see issuing from and entering it, a bee-like insect, of mild and innocent mien—it actually feeds itself on the pollen of flowers—but which provides a store of fresh insect-meat for its young, in a way which would make the late Mr. Burke hide his diminished head. A medical man, Doctor Léon Dufour, discovered the crime, but failed to detect the real secret of the creature's operations. He calls the culprit Cerceris buprestícide—Cerceris, the buprestis-slayer.

In July, 1840, while going his rounds, a patient suffering under some small ailment which few people die of kept him waiting. To pass the time he went into the garden, and took his post in an alley on the look-out for something. But seeing no more than Sister Anne did at first, he searched the pathway for the habitations of burrowing hymenopteræ. A tiny hill of sand, recently thrown out, caught his eye. It masked the orifice of a deep passage, which he traced by cautiously working with a spade. Soon he saw sparkling the brilliant wing-cases of a much-coveted buprestis; soon afterwards a whole buprestis; and then three and four entire buprestes delighted his gaze with their emeralds and gold. He could not believe his eyes. And that was only the beginning of his discoveries. Out of the ruins of the mine there crept a hymenopterous insect, which he captured as it tried to make its escape. In it he recognised the Cerceris buprestícide.

The entomologist's hot blood was up. It was not enough to have found the murderer and the victims; he must know who were the consumers of all this rare and valuable prey. It was as if he had found a human larder stocked with golden pheasants and birds of paradise. Having exhausted this first buprestiferous vein, which he had followed to the depth of a foot, he tried other soundings. In less than an hour he disinterred three cerceris dens, and his reward was fifteen whole buprestes, with the fragments of a still greater number. Here was a perspective to look forward to! In that locality he could catch in a few hours fifty or sixty female cerceres on the blossoms of various species of garlic. Their nests must be in the neighbourhood, provisioned in the same luxurious style. In them he would find, by hundreds, rare buprestes of which he had never been able to catch a single individual during thirty long years of assiduous hunting. And this dream soon became a reality.

Some days afterwards, while visiting the estate of one of his friends, in the midst of forests of maritime pines, he set about another cerceris hunt. Their dens were easily recognised. They were exclusively excavated in the principal alleys of the garden, where the compact and well-trodden soil offered the necessary conditions of solidity for the establishment of the insect's domicile. He examined, in the sweat of his brow, about twenty nests; for the work is not so easy as might be imagined. The treasuries, and consequently the treasures, are never less than a foot underground. The best plan to effect the burglary is to thrust into the orifice of the mine a straw or a long stem of grass, to serve as a conducting clue, and then to sap round it with a garden spade, so as to lift out the central lump of earth in one or

two pieces, and then break it up circumspectly on the ground.

Lively were the perspiring huntsman's transports every time he exposed to view a fresh collection of beetles blazing with copper, emeralds, and gold, and which glittered all the brighter for the burning sunshine. Never, during his long career as a naturalist, had he gazed on such a spectacle, or enjoyed such a treat. He knew not which to admire most—the brilliant coleopteræ, or the wonderful sagacity of the cerceres who had put them in store. Incredible as it may seem, amongst more than four hundred individuals so warehoused, the closest investigation could not find the smallest fragment which did not belong to the genus Buprestis. The learned collectors, though simple hymenopteræ, had not once committed the most trifling mistake.

The cerceres show themselves to be no fools, by the way in which they shape and stock their subterranean nurseries. We have seen that they select hard, solid soil, well beaten, and exposed to sunshine. This choice implies an intelligence, or, if you prefer it, an instinct, which we might feel inclined to believe the result of experience. Light or sandy soils would undoubtedly be much easier to perforate, but they would be continually apt to give way and cave in. Our insect digs her gallery by means of her mandibles and her anterior tarsi, which, for this purpose, are garnished with teeth, like those of a rake. She makes the entrance wider than the diameter of her body, because it has to admit a prey of larger dimensions than herself. The gallery is not vertical, which would make it liable to be filled up by the wind and other causes. Not far from its origin it makes a bend, which usually runs, for seven or eight inches from south to north, returning then to its first direction. Beyond the termination of this final gallery the careful mother places her progeny's cradles. These latter are five separate and independent cells, disposed in a sort of semicircle, hollowed into the form and size of an olive, polished and solid in their interior. Each cell is large enough to contain three buprestes, the ordinary ration allowed to each larva. It appears that the mother fly lays one egg in the midst of the three victims, and then closes the cell with earth in such a way that when the provisioning of the whole of the brood is concluded, all communication with the gallery ceases to exist.

When the cerceris returns from hunting with her quarry between her paws, she alights at the door of her underground lodging, and deposits it there for half a moment. Entering the gallery backwards, she seizes the helpless victim in her jaws, and drags it to the very bottom. Her visits are not confined to the time of providing her family with food. About the middle of August, when the buprestes are devoured, and the larvæ are hermetically sealed in their cocoons, the cerceris is seen to enter her gallery without bringing anything with her. It is clear that the anxious mother wishes to make sure, by repeated visits, that no enemy or accident threatens to destroy her progeny.

But by what inconceivable impulse is the cerceris, who feeds herself on nothing but the pollen of flowers, urged to procure, in spite of a thousand difficulties, a total different diet for descendants whom she will never behold, and to lie in wait on trees so dissimilar as oaks and pines, for the insects which are destined to become her prey? What entomological tact compels her strictly to confine herself, in the choice of her game, to one single generic group of insects of which she seems the born foe, and all the while capturing species which differ considerably amongst themselves in length, dimensions, and configuration?

The innate propensity which induces the cerceris to construct a nest for her young deep in the ground, manifests an instinct at once marvellous and sublime. That depth indicates that the tender larvæ will have to pass the winter snug in their burrows. Her maternal solicitude places them out of the reach of the inclemency of winter. And yet this careful mother will never see her offspring. Nor has experience given her the slightest hint that such things as winter and its frosts exist, since she came into the world during the great heats of summer, and after having provided for the future destinies of her family, she dies before the temperature is sensibly lowered. How can such facts be accounted for by any imaginable process of natural selection or progressive development? The phenomena are inexplicable, except by a belief in Divine Providence and Creative Wisdom.

The unearthing of the nests of the cerceris reveals a very singular fact. The buried buprestes, though showing no signs of life, are always perfectly fresh, as though killed that very day. Their colours are bright and life-like; their legs, antennæ, and the membranes which unite the segments of

their body are perfectly supple and flexible. It was at first supposed that their preservation was owing to the coolness of the soil, and the absence of light and air. But there must be some other cause of their incorruptibility, since twenty-four hours after the death of a beetle in summer its internal organs are either dried up or decomposed. The female cerceris, like the great majority of the hymenopteræ, is furnished with a sting and a poison-bag, and the guess was natural that the subtle liquid which inflicted death possessed antiseptic properties, preventing putrefaction. No one suspected that the captured and doomed buprestes were not really dead.

The real truth was discovered by M. Fabre, while observing the proceedings of the tuberculated cerceris, the largest European species, and divulged by him in the Annales des Sciences Naturelles. This cerceris excavates its burrows, and stores them with food during the last half of September. Instead of a flat footpath, it selects a vertical bank, but is not particular about the quality of the soil if it be but dry, and have a sunny aspect. The galleries are entirely the work of the females, who do not disdain to save themselves trouble by repairing burrows of the preceding year.

The victim selected by this cerceris is a large species of the weevil tribe, the Cleonis ophthalmicus. If the Buprestide cerceris, without going beyond the limits of a genus, indiscriminately captures any of the species of that genus, the tuberculated cerceris, more exclusive, confines itself to a single species. One is curious to know the motives which influence so singular and decided a choice. There may be differences of flavour and of nutritious qualities in the respective game, which the larvæ doubtless appreciate, but the mother insect is probably guided by anatomical rather than gastronomical considerations.

After what M. Dufour has told us respecting the wonderful preservation of the insects destined to feed carniverous larvæ, it is needless to add that the weevils deposited in the burrows or captive in the claws of their mortal enemy, although deprived for ever of all power of motion, are as completely untainted as when alive and active. Vivid hues, supple joints, healthy viscera, all conspire to make us doubt that the inert body lying before us is a veritable corpse, and we look at it with the expectation that we shall see the insect get up and walk away. In the presence of such facts, it is difficult to believe in the action of an antiseptic liquid. Life, we feel assured, must still be there, although latent and passive. Life only, still resisting the destructive invasion of chemical forces, can thus preserve an organism from decomposition. Life is still there, minus sensibility and motion. We have before us a marvel which neither ether nor chloroform are capable of effecting, and for whose cause we must refer to the mysterious laws of the nervous system.

The important point was to ascertain the way in which the murder was committed. With some difficulty, M. Fabre succeeded in surprising the assassin in the fact. The cerceris thrust her poisoned dart two or three times into the joint of the weevil's prothorax, between the first and second pair of legs. In the twinkling of an eye the deed was done. Without the slightest convulsive pang, without any of those twitchings of the limbs which accompany an animal's dying agony, the victim fell motionless for ever, as if struck by lightning. The stroke was terrible and admirable in its rapidity. Instantly the victor turned the vanquished on its back, seized it and flew off with it to her hidden den. By the effect of a microscopic puncture and an imperceptible drop of liquid, the weevil instantly lost all power of motion. But chemistry possesses no such subtle poison; consequently, we must inquire for the cause at the hands of anatomy and physiology. And to comprehend the mystery we must consider not so much the subtlety of the inoculated venom as the importance of the wounded organs, which are precisely the thoracic ganglions, whence spring the nerves which preside over all the motions of the creature's wings and legs.

The cerceres who, with a single stroke, benumb the animal functions of their prey, select precisely those species in which this nervous centralisation is the most complete. The buprestes suit them, because the nervous centres of the mesothorax and the metathorax are confounded in one single mass; the weevil suits them, because the three thoracic ganglions lie very close together, the two last even touching each other. The grand puzzle still remains unsolved: Who taught the assassin cerceres these refined secrets of anatomy?

The cerceres are not the only insects who display a like manifestation of marvellous foresight. The wasp family includes, besides the species which live in large com-

munities and build complex nests, like the hornet and the common wasp, others which lead a solitary life. One of these, the Odynerus spinipes, performs its task between the end of May and the beginning of July. Its first operation is to excavate a burrow, in clayey soil or stiff loam, at the further end of which it fashions a cell, plastering it neatly with home-made mortar. Each cell receives one egg.

The odynerus is a jack-of-all-trades. After working as a mason, it now plays the sportsman, beating the lucerne fields for the larvæ of a weevil. As soon as caught, it inflicts on each a wound which, without killing, paralyses them, arrests their growth, and retains them in the condition of living prey, incapable of resisting the worm which is to feed on them. At the bottom of each nest, close to the odynerus's egg, you will find a dozen green caterpillars rolled head and tail together, stuck by the back against the walls of the cell, without the possibility of moving.

The reason for this arrangement is clear. The odynerus lays only one egg in each cell. From that egg will issue a carnivorous worm who would disdain to eat stale or tainted meat. He must have fresh, tender, juicy, living game. His mother knows his peculiar tastes, and takes measures beforehand to indulge them. She fills the cell with animals which he will only have to devour one after the other, although their size enormously exceeds his own when he first comes forth from his egg. He eats the larva nearest at hand, without troubling himself about the future. He then proceeds to the second, then to the third, and so on till the twelfth course is eaten. Twelve caterpillars, one per day, neither more nor less, are his precise allowance. His mother, well aware of the required number, never exceeds it. Her entomological knowledge is still more surprising. She hunts after one single species of larvæ, and, what is still more curious, selects them all of nearly the same age. Disdaining larvæ that are too small for her purpose, she spares herself no trouble to find up those who are old and strong enough to bear a fast without perishing. If they died in the nest, and putrefied there, the stench would render it unbearable. Thanks to the peculiar wound she inflicts, their vital functions are instantly suspended; but life exists in a degree sufficient to preserve them from decay until they have satisfied the wants of the young odynerus, who then undergoes his metamorphosis, tears open his chrysalis shell with his teeth, shakes, unfolds, and essays his wings, and then launches boldly into air and sunshine.

"What admirable maternal instinct!" some will exclaim. Others, looking further, will add, "What marvellous providential combination!"

AN AUTUMN DAWN.

The sun-mist spreads a woof of quivering gold
On the blue mountain-tops, and o'er the crest
Of mighty Skiddaw, seamed with many a scar
By the fierce storms of ages, lies a cloud,
A crimson cloud, gold-fringed, and beautiful,
As is Aurora's brow, when from her couch
She, rosy-fingered, rises radiant,
Veiling her white limbs from the God of Day.

Upon the armoured furze the cunning work
Of spiders spreads its silver tracery,
Glistening with morning dew; and yellowing tufts
Of brake-grass, withered by the early frosts,
Give covert to the lark, whose clear shrill pipe
Wakes the hill-echoes with its melody,
Sole minstrel of these wilds.

The autumn tints,
Purple, and red, and chrome, are on the fells,
With scarce an eye, save that of shepherd boy,
To drink their wondrous beauty. On the wing,
In solitary state, the goss-hawk skims
The vast expanse of sky. Fair, bright, and pure,
Sweet, calm, and mellow, holy, grand, and still.
Voiceless, yet speaking with a thousand tongues,
Breaks forth the radiance of this autumn dawn.

"EXCEPT THE MAYOR."

Who told me, I wonder, and when and where was I told, a preposterous story, with nothing in it, but which tickled me strangely at the time, and which has never failed so to titillate my risible sense, to this day? The tale went this wise. Some four decades since, when the Municipal Corporations Reform Act was passed, a number of respectable towns in England became boroughs, and were not only privileged to return members to parliament, but likewise received charters of incorporation, and were consequently empowered to elect a mayor, aldermen, and town council for purposes of local self-government. I can remember, indeed, when Brighton the magnificent was destitute of such dignitaries, and was only the Hundred of Herringbone, governed by a high constable; but the town of which I am about to speak, and which I will discreetly allude to under the name of Frogborough, was distant at least a hundred and fifty miles from the queen of watering-places, and was situate in quite a different part of the island. It was a very small town; but had become, mentally, so prodigiously inflated by its accession of importance as the seat of a

mayor and corporation, that the Gazetteers might have changed its name to Oxborough; and if it went on swelling in its own estimation in a proportionate ratio, I should not be surprised to hear that it had burst long ago. There alighted, one evening, at the principal hotel at Frogborough—it had only been an inn prior to the passing of the Mayor-giving Act — a certain personage whom I will call the Irreverent Traveller. He was a hungry traveller, too, and immediately after he had flung his baggage to the boots, demanded supper in a voice of thunder. It was the landlord who condescended to bring his repast, and to wait upon him while he partook of it; and for two good reasons did mine host so stoop to conquer. In the first place, his only waiter was assisting at an entertainment given that very evening by his worship the mayor of Frogborough; in the next, the landlord could not but think that a traveller with such a loud voice as that possessed by the Irreverent one, must be a personage of some importance. The traveller partook of a dishful of eggs and ham; two "helps" of cold roast beef; a considerable amount of pie, and a prodigious quantity of pickles; and made no more of a crusty quartern loaf than though it had been a French roll. He drank a pint and a half of strong ale, and two glasses of brandy-and-water; and then, flicking the crumbs off his knees with a great bandana handkerchief, he drew a deep breath, and slapping the landlord on the back—I warned you that he was an Irreverent Traveller—exclaimed:

"There! no man in England could have a better supper than I've had this night."

The landlord didn't mind being slapped on the back, for the guest looked like one who could afford to pay for such familiarities. Still, there was something in the dogmatical manner of the traveller that pained him, and he gave an "ahem!" in a deprecating tone.

"What's that?" cried the guest, in a voice like unto the sound of a trumpet.

"I beg your pardon, sir," the landlord began in a tone subdued but firm.

"WHAT?" repeated the traveller in stentorian accents.

"You said," the landlord went on, politely but seriously, "that no man in England could have supped better than you have done this night."

"Of course I did," retorted the guest. "No man could have supped better."

"Except the mayor," said the host, quietly but solemnly.

"Except whom?" roared the traveller.

"The mayor—his worship the mayor of Frogborough—he's a supping now," the landlord, still deeply agitated, but still determined, replied.

"Hang the mayor of Frogborough!" shouted the Irreverent Traveller; "and tell him, with my compliments, that he may go to Bath."

The landlord gazed for an instant at the iconoclast, and then rushed from his presence, calling for the constables.

They locked the Irreverent Traveller up in the cage; and the next day they brought him up before the borough bench, charging him with fearful crimes. The country was in a disturbed state just then, and a vinous postboy came forward to swear that the traveller had confided to him his complete approval of the principles contained in Cobbett's Register. It was currently reported, too—being market-day—that the prisoner had been discovered lurking under the lee of a hayrick with a tinder-box and matches in one pocket, and an air-gun in the other, and at the farmers' ordinary the rumour ran that he was SWING.

The end of the judicial investigation was the discharge, "with a caution," of the traveller; whereupon the Irreverent one, planting his hat firmly on his head, delivered himself of the following seditious words:

"I shall be cautious, indeed, before I venture into this poky hole of a town again; and allow me to add, that of all the stupid old fools I ever met with, the landlord of your hotel is the greatest—except the mayor."

He turned and fled, and justice was robbed of her prey.

How often, and in how many countries, has this idle jest occurred to me, often without rhyme or reason, and, in most instances, without any effort of volition on my part. But who has not his particular "tickle-ment?" The old story of the man at Stoney Stratford, who was so terribly bitten by fleas, and the older one still, of the ruined gamester who kicked his valet for always tying his shoe, will never want laughers.

"Except the mayor." I should be ashamed to revert to this Frogborough story in this place, but that it has some tangible relation to certain circumstances in which I found myself on the evening of the Ninth of November last. I should have been in bed, for I was ill; but by a strange turn of Fortune's whirligig I found myself arrayed in that solemn mockery of woe which is known as

evening costume, and standing on a scarlet covered daïs, and by the side of a Chair, which, so splendid were its adornments, might, without any amplitude of language, have been termed a Throne, in the council chamber of the Guildhall of the City of London. It was close upon seven in the evening, and, my infirm health notwithstanding, I had a not unpleasant persuasion that dinner-time was at hand.

But how on earth did I contrive to find myself on that daïs? The high places are not for me; of that fact I am fully aware. Below the salt, behind the screen, or in a high-up gallery looking down on festivities in which I was not, personally, privileged to participate, was, I knew full well, the proper and normal position which I should have occupied. How had I come hither? Physically, by means of the Metropolitan Railway from South Kensington to Cannon-street, and thence on my legs to Guildhall. But, morally, fortune, fate, chance, my "kismet," my star, my good or evil genius, had brought me to this pass; and, being there, I will not conceal the fact that I felt horribly uncomfortable. I am not fond of thrusting myself where I am not wanted. I shun the society of the great. I never talk to people in omnibuses, or railway trains, or at hotel table d'hôtes. I don't know the members of my own club. I don't know my fellow-shopmen in the establishment where I serve. I never picked up a friend at a watering-place. I never made but one chance acquaintance in my life. He was a charming man, and gave me his card; and a few days afterwards I read in the papers that he had been brought up at Bow-street on a charge of bigamy. Not but that a bigamist may be charming.

But I was desperately wretched on the daïs because I happened to be the only person there in plain evening dress. "They can't take me for the American minister," I reasoned with myself, "because the name of his Excellency, who is standing within half a dozen paces of me, has been twice called out in the hearing of the brilliant assembly; and, besides, being a general officer in the American service, he is attired in a uniform closely resembling that of a British rear-admiral. Nor can it be assumed that I am the minister from Liberia; for, lo, he is black." For a moment I took cowardly refuge in the thought that I might pass for an M.P. for an Irish constituency; but alas! all the members of the Honourable House on the daïs had had their styles and titles proclaimed. I indulged at last in the humble hope that the company might think I was a waiter despatched from the hall to say that dinner was ready. That fiction perhaps might go down with the First Lord of the Admiralty, or the Queen's Ancient Sergeant, or the Chilian chargé d'affaires (they were all close to me); but I was guiltily conscious that the idea would not be for one moment entertained by certain officials of the corporation, whom I saw standing below the "haut pas" on the floor of the council chamber. I felt that the mace-bearer's eye was upon me. I shrank beneath the searching gaze of the common crier. What would I not have given to conciliate the placid old gentleman who wears the fur porringer on his head, and carries the sword of civic state? They knew full well that I was not present to proclaim the readiness of the banquet. Familiar with the minutest traditions of municipal hospitality, they knew that dinner would be announced by a personage in a court-suit, and with a flourish of trumpets. When you find yourself in places where you have no ostensible right to be present, there always remains open the loophole of saying that you are "a gentleman connected with the press." But, woe is me! on the evening of the Ninth of November I had not the remotest connexion with the press; and I had, besides, the uneasy consciousness that several gentlemen really affiliated to that valuable institution, and formerly my colleagues thereupon, were surveying me scornfully from afar off, and whispering among themselves, "Just like his confounded impudence. How the dence did *he* get there?" It wasn't my fault. I owed my card of invitation to the banquet to the courtesy of a deservedly popular sheriff, and at an earlier period of the evening, after making my way to the daïs, and paying the customary obeisances to the chief magistrate, I had endeavoured quietly to slip into the background, or into some quiet corridor, where, behind some bust, or flowering plant, I might see the grand folks passing in procession to the banqueting-hall. Woe! I was standing tranquilly on a common councillor's toes, and behind the towering chignon of a deputy's wife, when I was amicably taken into custody by an under-sheriff, and informed that I was to escort the daughter of an exalted civic functionary to the hall. I do declare that, at that moment, I would have preferred the tap on the shoulder from a sheriff's officer to the friendly message of the under-sheriff; but mightier magnificoes remained behind. The under-sheriff

himself was a sight splendid to behold. Point-lace cravat, embroidered waistcoat, cut-steel buttons, bright-hilted sword, bag-wig, pink silk legs, patent leather shoes, every sumptuary luxury had been bestowed upon him. "Better," I thought, inwardly groaning, "the hooked nose and greasy surtout of Mr. Rabshekah of Chancery-lane." There was no help. Clearly there was no making a run for it. I gave myself up, with dogged resignation, to Fate, as though the under-sheriff's summons had only been preliminary to the apparition of another municipal functionary on the scene—with the night-cap and the pinioning straps.

There are some people who could have borne this kind of thing with perfect equanimity; nay, who would have found themselves quite at home on this square island of scarlet cloth, in the midst of an ocean of gas and watchful eyes. I don't speak of those who are to the manner born. Of course, the Chancellor of the Exchequer can meet the gaze of the Home Secretary without quailing. The plenipotentiary from the Venezuelan Republic is not afraid of the minister from Honduras, and the Prime Minister is not afraid of anybody. These good folks are upon terms of mutual equality; but, on the other hand, I know several Toms, and Dicks, and Harrys, members, as I am, of the "lower middle classes," who can stand any amount of aristocratic fill without flinching. They like to be among their betters, and so let them know that they, Tom, Dick, and Harry, are there. Observe Tom when, as secretary to the Invalided Rabbit-skin Sellers' Association, he welcomes the Duke of Haresfoot to the annual dinner, at which his grace is to take the chair. He patronises the august nobleman; I saw him once poke the peer in the ribs as his grace was taking his coffee after the banquet. He was telling him a funny story, evidently. Could *you* tell a funny story to a duke? *I* couldn't. Admire Dick, again, when he meets the Earl of Sablejamb—whom he saw last year at Homburg—when he comes across him in Pall Mall. "Halloa! old fellow," he cries, "what a jolly time of it we had when we last met." Sablejamb, who is as proud as Lucifer, save when he wants to borrow a ten-pound note, tries hard to cross the road; but the unabashed Dick pursues him, shouting out an invitation for my lord to come and dine with him at the Rollicking Rams' Club—a dreadful place, with a nominal subscription, and where they drink beer from the pewter. Marvel at Harry button-holing a bishop—a live bishop—on the steps of the Athenæum, and holding him in familiar converse, on the strength of having sat next to him at a meeting of the Society for suppressing Indigence by means of the Lash. I say that there are people who can do these things. I aver, candidly, that I cannot; and I thank my stars that I have still nerves and ideas befitting the lowliness of my station, and that I am heartily frightened of the Lord Chancellor. On that memorable Ninth his lordship's golden robe rustled against me; and some of the powder from his ambrosial wig actually came off on my nose. I saw his shoes—his glorious buckled shoes. Hitherto I had only known chancellors from the waist upwards, as we know one of Mr. Attenborough's assistants. I felt faint. Reason tottered on her throne. Was I, by the act of standing on that daïs, in contempt of the High Court of Chancery? Should I fling myself at the cancellarian feet and cry, "Mercy. I unfile all my bills; I revoke all my answers; I will consent to the costs being costs in the cause: only forgive and spare me the terrors of the Third Seal?" I am not an eavesdropper; but from my propinquity I could not choose but hear that the Keeper of the Queen's Conscience was talking to a Justice in Eyre about the weather. Justices in Eyre, bah! they were drugs in this market of splendour. I mentally snapped my fingers at them. The Corps Diplomatique, the Elder Brethren of the Trinity House, the Court of Lieutenancy, and such small deer, I took but little account of. I had touched the wig of the greatest personage in all this realm of England—except the Mayor.

Ay! there he was, in his golden prime, and at once recalled the legend of the Irreverent being who contemned the worshipful mayor of Frogborough. That landlord who resented the outrage was, after all, in the right. What were chancellors, premiers, ambassadors, bishops, justices in Eyre, and elder brethren of the Trinity House, on this instant Ninth of November in comparison with the mayor of famous London town? I could not help at the same time bringing to mind that drolly exaggerated account of a lord mayor's career given by Theodore Hook in Gilbert Gurney; and that dismally dramatic scene conjured up by the novelist of the ex-lord mayor returning on the night of the expiration of his year of splendour to his drysalter's warehouse in a dingy City lane. All his good fellowship with his majesty's ministers and the foreign ambassadors had come to an end. No more did his wife and daughters dance with princes and nobles.

He had reverted once more to the rank of a mere vulgar Cit; and shortly afterwards, walking on the Steyne at Brighton with his family, he—only a few days since lord mayor, and the entertainer of princes—was horrified at being accosted by a brother tradesman who reminded him that he owed him sundry shillings for a barrel of coal-tar used for painting a pigstye.

When I had gotten over my fright about the dais and the big-wigs upon it, and had walked demurely in the skirts of the procession round the tables of the banqueting-hall—the lovely and accomplished daughter of the civic dignitary to whom I gave my trembling arm little knew how much more in need of her smelling-bottle I was than she could be—when I had got comfortably wedged in my seat at table, between an affable gentleman in a blue coat thickly splashed with gold—I fear that he had something to do with the r-y-l household—and the domestic chaplain of an aldermanic or shrieval grandee; when the view of my neighbours opposite was happily obstructed by a colossal epergne piled high with grapes, and surmounted by a hot-house pine, on which, when the company rose at the bidding of the toast-master, I felt inclined to browse, as a cameleopard nibbles at the topmost branches of a tall tree; when the dishes of passing waiters behind me had been accurately dug between my eighth and ninth dorsal vertebræ; when I had heard the Guards' band discoursing sweet music in the gallery; and when in fine the banquet, and the clattering of plates, and the chinking of glasses, and the popping of champagne corks had come to an end, and we had leisure for a little ice and fruit, and quiet chat before the speech-making began, I could not help thinking that the times—so far as civic festivities were concerned—had altered very wonderfully since the days of Theodore Hook. Where were the guttling and guzzling and gormandising one used to hear about as chronic at City banquets? We had, it is true, turtle, both thick and clear; but I heard no squabbles about callipash and callipee, no clamorous demands for green fat; and I observed that an alderman at the next table to mine positively ordered julienne soup and eschewed turtle altogether. My neighbour in the coat splashed with gold dined on the wing of a pheasant and a tumbler of hock-and-seltzer; and to my amazement I perceived that a decanter of port by the side of the domestic chaplain remained wholly untasted throughout the evening. There was no custard, and no Lord Mayor's fool to jump into it as in the olden time; and I had been taught by attentive study of City traditions that the guests at Guildhall on the Ninth of November ought to "wallow in custard." There were no sprats. Should not the first sprats of the season be served at the Lord Mayor's table in Guildhall? The loving-cup went round; and the usual expressive pantomime went on among the guests who partook of that famous "drinkhael," but it branched off somehow before it reached me; and I still lack "some one to love," in a parcel-gilt goblet. I looked up to see whether Gog and Magog were still in their old places. Yes; the affable giants were, as usual, on guard: but they were perfectly sober. So were the eight hundred and seventy-two guests beneath them. Everybody sat demurely at table; nobody was under it. People who should have been cracking t'other bottle were trifling with water-ice and wafer-cakes; and shortly after the termination of the Premier's speech, I distinctly heard a common councilman observe to a secondary, that he should like to slip out and get a quiet cigar. A common councilman wishing to smoke! He wore a full beard and moustache also, which increased my astonishment. There were no marrow-bones. There were no peacocks, served with their tails displayed, nor did I see any ruffs and reeves. Vast sirloins of beef were indeed carved with much state and ceremony, in lofty pulpits on either side of the porch of entrance; but the beef was cold. The entire dinner, in fact, save at the upper table, where an elegant repast à la Russe was served, was cold. It might have been a collation given to inaugurate the opening of a new branch of the Dan, Beersheba, and Domdaniel Railway. It much more resembled an elegant and business-like reunion of that nature, than such a revolting display of coarse gluttony and wine-bibbing as is pictured by Hogarth in his Sheriff's Feast plate in Industry and Idleness.

I was quite satisfied, however, after having frugally, but succulently, dined on a plate of turtle, a spoonful of lobster-salad, a preserved greengage, some ice pudding, and several filberts. I had never been in Guildhall before on a festive occasion. The sight to me was a really glorious one; and I delighted in it because it had been my fortune to witness some of the most memorable of the pageantries which have occurred during my time. Yes, I had witnessed very nearly all of them; and, if

not as a guest, at least as a spectator I had watched the pomps and vanities of most of the great ones of the earth—except the Mayor. Having seen him, I may humbly express my opinion that, although his surroundings have somewhat changed, he himself is not in the least altered, but is as powerful and influential a chief magistrate as ever a Whittington or a Gresham has been among his predecessors. The Men in Brass cumber his pageant no more; and his barge is laid up in ordinary. He has ceased to go swan-hopping, and it is a long time since he has shut the gates of Temple Bar in the face of royalty. He might even, perhaps, be able to dispense with Gog and Magog, and the City marshal, and the placid old retainer with the fur porringer on his head; but he would still be the Head of the most ancient, the most charitable, the most hospitable city in the world. I thought, as I wended my way homewards after the dinner, smoking that cigar which the common councilman had longed for, that there might be a good many things in the City of London requiring, if not abolition, at least thorough reform. Perhaps the revenues of the Battledore and Shuttlecock Makers' Company are slightly mismanaged. Perhaps St. Wapshot's Hospital is not quite in the state it should be. Certainly the congregationless City churches should be disestablished. Assuredly St. Paul's-churchyard needs re-arrangement. Indubitably Temple Bar should go by the board. "Revolution may come," I muttered somewhat sleepily alighting from my cab, "revolution may upset most things for aught I care—except the Mayor. He is a better Chief Citizen than any prefect, syndic, burgomaster, or gonfaloniere that I wot of." Whereupon I went to bed, and dreamt of that untasted loving-cup, and that everybody had partaken of it—except the Mayor.

GEOFFREY LUTTRELL'S NARRATIVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IN THAT STATE OF LIFE," &c

IN ELEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER IX.

THE course of events during the next four years may be briefly told. As regards my life, and those with which it had hitherto been so closely bound, circumstances had separated us completely. Harry Walbrooke and I scarcely ever met now; and yet he was master of the Grange. The squire was dead; Mrs. Walbrooke and Lena were abroad; and as I never heard from Mrs. Ridgway of Hapsbury, I did not venture to write to her. Thus the links were all severed; and the little I knew of those who had been and were still so dear to me, was by rumour, some faint echo of which penetrated even to my solitude.

The fact is, my poor friend's course was a downward one from the time Assunta married. He became utterly reckless, and led a life of dissipation during the few months he remained with Mr. Strahan, after the morning when I broke the fatal news to him, which divided us further every day. His associates were very distasteful to me; but I would not have shrunk from them, if my joining the parties to which he constantly invited me would have done him any good; but it would not; and as I had to work very hard for my bread at that time, the interruption of labour would have been serious. Then followed that gradual slackening of intimacy which is inevitable when the tenour of one man's life is a silent protest against his friend's. Between him and his uncle the feud remained unhealed, and he never saw the squire again alive. Mr. Walbrooke, who might be said to be still in the prime of life, and whose obstinacy—not to speak of his affection — would have suffered keenly in disinheriting Harry, and so owning himself worsted in the long-sustained contest with his favourite nephew, delayed altering his will from week to week, in the hope that speedy ruin might bring the wretched boy to seek forgiveness. The strong man, in his pride, had no thought of being dispossessed; but one stronger than he came suddenly into his house by night, and in the morning Squire Walbrooke of the Grange lay dead. By a will, dated five years before, all his landed estates passed to Harry, charged with a large jointure to Mrs. Walbrooke, and a certain sum to Lena. And so it came to pass that, in her bitter irony, Fortune cast this ill-deserved gift at Harry's feet—just nine months too late to save him from life-long ruin and misery. Ah, had Assunta but waited! How cruel it seemed!

The young squire went down and took possession of the Grange, and his connexion with Strahan's of course ceased. But a number of so-called "friends," whom he had made in his short London career, followed him ere long, and every fast man from Oxford, and every needy sportsman in the county, who wanted a good mount and cared for a good bottle of claret, found his way to the Grange. In such company I should have been very much out of

place; these men and I had no one idea in common, and to witness their orgies, and to see foolish, generous-hearted Harry allowing his substance to be devoured by these vultures would have only made me angry. I refused all his pressing invitations. "If you ever are alone, and want me, I will come to you," I said, "but not when your army of swashbucklers is with you—don't ask me." And he did not after a while. I heard of him, alas! from time to time, and what I heard was as bad as it could well be. The life at the Grange was a scandal to the whole county; it was said that there was scarcely a night that the young squire went to bed sober, and even once in the hunting-field he had been in a condition which necessitated his being taken home. His uncle's old friends (particularly those who had marriageable daughters) bore with this state of things as long as it was possible; but when every effort to lure him into the decent, if dull, society of the neighbourhood proved abortive, they gave him up; it was felt to be impossible for steady old fathers of families to continue going to the Grange.

Harry and Assunta had never met, nor were they likely to do so, though living only twenty-five miles apart; inasmuch as Mrs. Ridgway, of Hapsbury, it was said, never went outside the park gates, and within them the young squire had, of course, never set foot. His animosity against Mr. Ridgway was well known, and broke out on the mere mention of that gentleman's name into the bitterest scoffs; but of the lady he was never known to speak. Rumours of the life she led I suppose must have reached him; he must have heard of her through Lena, who corresponded with her friend from time to time. But these letters would have told him little of the truth, as he must have known; and it is certain that, from the moment he heard of her marriage, he ceased to try and hold any sort of communication with the object of his unhappy passion. Perhaps I was the only person in the world who guessed that he had not forgotten her; and that he vainly imagined the life of violent exercise and moral excess would act as a styptic to the wound which still bled when it was touched. Not that he ever spoke to me of her, even in the early days of wrath and bitterness; indeed, he expressly begged me never to allude to the past, or to anything that should remind him of his loss.

It only remains for me to add, before I take up the thread of my narrative again, that, in spite of constant and anxious endeavours to learn all I possibly could of Mrs. Ridgway, the information I gained was but meagre. Mr. Ridgway and his wife led a very secluded life. They had no children. Mrs. Ridgway was not supposed to be a happy woman; but very little seemed to be known about her. Mr. Ridgway discouraged intimacy with any neighbours. At certain stated intervals he received them all with sumptuous courtesy (I believe it would be a misuse of the word to call it hospitality); for, since his marriage, most of those who had kept aloof from him, had come forward, and for the sake of the young wife were disposed to forget any sinister rumours regarding the husband. But it was as though he said, "Now that I have conquered these people, they shall see that I care nothing for their society. They receive me; they come to my house; it is enough." He declined all invitations. A few savants, dilettanti, and stray foreigners of various kinds, stayed at Hapsbury from time to time; and sometimes the magnates of those parts were bidden to meet them. This, as far as I could gather, was the only intercourse between Mr. and Mrs. Ridgway and their neighbours.

It chanced in the February of 1831 that I had occasion to make a journey to Peterborough on professional business. During my stay there, I learnt that the day coach from that city to York passed within a few miles of Hapsbury, which was not more than forty miles from Peterborough. My business concluded, I was in no special hurry to return home, and a temptation, which will sound strange to many, urged me, now I was so near, to go on to Hapsbury, or at least into its immediate vicinity, and learn what I could of my poor Assunta, even if I was unable to see her, for I had been given to understand that Mrs. Ridgway was generally denied to morning visitors. Acting upon this impulse, which I found irresistible, I took my place in the coach one morning, and was at the small town of L. early in the afternoon. From there, with a knapsack on my back, I walked over to the village of Hapsbury, some six miles distant. There had been a long drought, and the road was as deep in limestone dust as though it had been summer, the result of which was that my old painting-blouse and cap, my hair, eyelashes, every part of my outward man, was thickly powdered over, and I resembled nothing so much as an indigent baker or bricklayer out of work. In fact, one charitably-minded old gentleman on a cob did actually throw me sixpence, for which

I touched my cap, thinking it would only distress him, and check the stream of his benevolence towards the next wayfarer, if I explained his error. So much to account for the fact that when I entered the tap-room of the little public at Hapsbury, and found three men over their pipes and beer, two of whom were unmistakably tramps, the third a boosy labourer, they viewed me without suspicion, and continued to discourse freely, as before one of their own caste. The tramps were bound for Nottingham, Hapsbury lying on the high road, I found, between that city and L., which I had just left. The discussion, as I entered, was as to the relative excellence of various roads. At first I understood this to refer to their paving, which in some parts of the country is but bad walking. It was, however, as I soon learnt, the moral rather than the physical aspect of the king's highway, which the worthy couple had under consideration.

"Nottingham to Leicester's a betterer road nor this. I left ten crosses and three double crosses behind me the last time as I done that 'ere road," said one speaker, looking round with an air of satisfaction, not unmixed with pride.

"Besides dots?" asked the other.

"Besides dots. They're the softest 'carted lot you ever see. It's true that this 'ere way, there's one 'ouse as is always good for five crosses."

"What do that mean?" asked the boosy labourer, taking the pipe from his mouth, his leaden eye lighted up with a gleam of curiosity.

"Why, every cross is a tizzy, to be sure, and a tizzy's a sixpence, if you don't know," said the first speaker, with an air of profound contempt for bucolic ignorance.

"And what's dots?"

"Dots is brownies, as we call 'em sometimes, that's pence. We don't make much account hov a road as 'as got nothin' but dots along the palin's. Now this 'ere lady's one o' the right sort, poor thing. I s'pose she's kep' in a kind o' prison, for scores and scores o' times as I come this way, she's al'ays at that same winder, and she's always good for 'alf-a-crown. Indeed, for any chap as 'as a squaller——"

"What's a squaller?" said the rustic, resolved to satisfy his legitimate thirst for information, regardless of the traveller's scorn.

"Why, bless your 'eart, a squaller's a brat as squalls, to be sure. I might ha' bought Mary Hanne's squaller for ten bob, and wery good interest it'd ha' paid me for my money. This 'ere good lady al'ays gives five bob to a squaller, they tells me. I s'pose she's never a child of 'er own, eh?"

"Noa." Here the fellow scratched his head, and added, after a pause, "she's be a loanesome life, folks say; but the squoire be foine and rich, any ways. Eh, but money be a foine thing."

"And be 'im as charitable as 'er?" asked the second tramp; and turning to his fellow-labourer, he murmured something in a low voice, of which I only caught the words, "distressed hoperatives." But the spark of cupidity, if kindled, was quickly extinguished.

"Noa, noa. You'll not be gettin' the blind side o' th' squoire. It be th' missis as be for the givin'. He be all for argyfying; and when he lost his tri'le 'gain th' village, 'bout th' path, he were that riled, he never give us nothin' no moure. They tells me as th' parson's tried to stan' up again him for t' argyfy, but it warn't no good; he wouldn't give a ha'porth to th' school along o' that 'ere path."

This was a dark saying to me, and as the conversation changed soon after, I took advantage of the landlord's entry to ask for a bedroom, and to order some dinner. But as I saw from his face that my appearance did not inspire him with much confidence (which was what I wanted, at that moment, more even than the bed or dinner), I followed him into the passage, and taking some money from my pocket, I showed it him, and said:

"Though I wear a shabby coat, I will pay my way—don't be afraid."

And upon mine host protesting that nothing was further from his thoughts, we drifted into an amicable discourse, which I led gradually to the subject of Squire Ridgway and "his lady." I learnt that the state of feeling between the squire and his village was anything but pleasant, owing to a right of way across his park, which he had vainly endeavoured to stop up. This path led directly under the window of Mrs. Ridgway's boudoir, and was a poisoned thorn in the side of the exclusive "man of taste." Mine host was of opinion that to the pale, lonely lady, sitting for ever at her window, and debarred, by the existing feud, from even visiting the poor, the sight of the labourer, plodding homewards after his day's work, of the rosy milkmaid, laden with the spoil of the heavy-uddered kine, of even the foot-sore tramp,

trailing his weary steps through the cool grass, with a sense of thankfulness after the hot flinty road, were pleasant breaks in the monotony of her day, which she would have been sorry to lose. But however this might be, Mr. Ridgway, with that smooth implacability (which I knew so well), had never forgiven the obstinate resistance which the village had made to the infringement of their right. From that day Mr. Ridgway declined to do anything further for the poor, for the school, or for the church; he forbade his wife's going into the village; he cut off his establishment, as far as practicable, from all communication with his humbler neighbours, as he discouraged it with the richer ones, and all this he did deliberately, without heat, or visible expression of anger. The parish had tried conclusions with him, he said to the good vicar militant, who returned to the charge repeatedly; he, Mr. Ridgway, was a man of peace, and they had desired war; they had made their election—it was well; he had nothing more to say to them. And from this ultimatum nothing would move him.

What I had heard, both in the tap-room and from the landlord, gave me plenty to think of that night. I made up my mind that I would not leave the neighbourhood till I had seen and spoken to Assunta; but how was this to be managed? Mine host had given me to understand that, unless Mr. Ridgway was in the humour to receive company, the doors were shut against every visitor to his wife. I resolved to reconnoitre the ground before making any attempt, and early in the forenoon of the following day I started to walk across the park by the public path in question. On approaching the stately Italian palace, with its sky-line of marble balustrade, broken by busts and urns, I pulled my cap further over my face, and, disguising my gait with a stoop and a limp, I crept slowly past the angle of the house, in which was the window which had been described to me. On the other side of the path was a broad sheet of water, upon which this window consequently looked, and just beyond it came the great portico and flight of steps. The gardens, terraces, and fountains were all on the other side of the house. I looked up at the window, there was no one to be seen; I lingered, I looked back, and then I turned and walked past it again. At last I bethought me of my sketch-book, and, taking it out, I turned my back to the house, and facing the water, with the chestnut-wood behind it, and the soft line of hills in the distance, I made a few random strokes, hoping that she I sought might be attracted presently to the window. I had not stood thus five minutes when I heard a step upon the gravel behind me, and, turning, I saw a powdered footman approaching. "It is all up now," I thought; "I am going to be warned that, though there is a right of way, there is no right of standing to sketch in front of the house." And I shut my book. Imagine my surprise when the servant thus addressed me:

"Mr. Ridgway has sent me to ask, sir, if your name is not Luttrell? If so, he hopes you will walk in."

I never felt more confused. Of course I acceded; but when I reflected upon my appearance, and remembered how I had limped and slouched, and that the lynx-eyed master here had detected me from his window under this masquerade, I confess I was ashamed of meeting him. My only course was boldness, and a statement of such portion of the truth as I could tell. My conductor led me through the great hall, with its marble pavement, and busts of the Roman emperors along the walls, into a small morning-room, hung entirely with rare engravings in narrow black frames. A table, with a Sèvres chocolate service on it, stood near the fire, and before it, sipping his breakfast, in a black quilted satin dressing-gown, stood the master of the house. The window, through which he had seen me, was in front of him, as he stood with his back to the fireplace, and to his right was a door leading into the library. He looked as young as ever, and, with that silver-electro-plated smile of his, held out two fingers, saying:

"Ben venuto, Signor Pittore. By a curious coincidence you were in my thoughts five minutes before I saw you out of the window. What brings you to our fens? Not a study of the picturesque, I imagine?"

"I am on a short walking tour, having left my heavy luggage at L. I was debating in my mind whether I could venture to present myself here, in this mendicant's guise, Mr. Ridgway, when——"

"Never mind, my dear sir. I hate explanations, don't you? They never explain anything. I am very glad to see you, no matter what may have brought you here—you are the very man I want. You have arrived very opportunely to give me a piece of advice; but, first, will you have some breakfast? There are lobster cut-

lets, and pâté de foie gras," said he, taking up a slip of paper on the breakfast tray, and then added with a laugh, "Not that I often eat anything myself at this hour, but their existence is thus notified to me."

I said I had breakfasted three hours since; and then I asked for Mrs. Ridgway. She was well, he replied, and reverted at once to the subject which was evidently uppermost in his mind. He had purchased a ceiling, by Giulio Romano, out of a palace at Genoa, and it had lately arrived at Hapsbury. It had received some damage in the transit. Whether to have it retouched and varnished before it was put up, or wait to see the effect when it was up, and how much restoration would be needed, were points on which he wished for professional advice. My careful studies for years in our National Gallery, and the attention I had bestowed upon such subjects, rendered me competent to give an opinion; and I followed Mr. Ridgway into the crimson saloon, where the canvas representing the Fall of Phaeton was stretched upon the floor. The result of the examination and discussion that ensued was all that I need here repeat. In my judgment, the less the picture was touched the better, and the very small amount of reparation requisite, I believed I could do myself, as well as, and without the risk of, its being subjected to another journey to London. Mr. Ridgway was delighted; it was just what he wished, and I, of course, very gladly acceded to his invitation to remain at Hapsbury until the work was completed. A dog-cart was sent over to L. for my things, and in the course of a couple of hours I found myself, to my astonishment, regularly installed in the house, to effect an entry into which, that morning, had seemed to me a matter of some difficulty. Still, I did not see its mistress. Mr. Ridgway remained with me, and conversed brilliantly, but he never alluded to his wife, and when at last I asked point blank if I might be allowed to pay my respects to Mrs. Ridgway, he only replied, "Oh, you will see her by-and-bye." In the course of conversation I ventured to say that I heard he led a very secluded life, rarely admitting visitors.

"Are you surprised that I do not choose to be bored by all the idiots of a neighbourhood like this, where there is not a man who cares for anything but riding after a wretched little animal, with a pack of hounds?" was his rejoinder. "I am glad to see any man of cultivation, otherwise I prefer my own society, and that of my books. In them, I daily make acquaintances far pleasanter than any I find about here."

Not a word about his wife. I could not keep silence. "And Mrs. Ridgway. Does not she find it lonely without any society?"

"I do not understand any one but a fool feeling lonely," he said, in rather a freezing tone. "Mrs. Ridgway is a person of cultivation. She has her books and her music. The visits of a set of gossiping women could not—ought not—to be any pleasure to her. Silence is better for her than to listen to evil speaking, lying, and slandering, which is what the ladies of England indulge in during their morning visits."

After this it was clear to me that the gossip of the county was in some measure the cause (but in what way I could not then perceive) of the existing state of things at Hapsbury. Mr. Ridgway had gained all he had wanted; the county had flocked to his house; how could its idle tongues affect him now?

"Does Mrs. Ridgway take any interest in your poorer neighbours?" I asked, presently, anxious to elicit something from my host on this head.

"I have been obliged to interdict all that sentimental visiting of cottages which has lately come into fashion among fine ladies," was his reply. "The poor here are an ignorant, obstinate race. I have washed my hands of them some time ago. Any pettifogging lawyer, or low radical parson, who will talk to them of their rights, can twist them round his finger. As Butler says:

> And what they're confidently told,
> By no sense else can be control'd.

They were advised to resist me, and I hope they value the advice now," he added, with a smile. I said no more.

The day closed in, and the dressing-gong for dinner sounded. I hurried down to the Spanish drawing-room, that famed apartment hung with Cordova leather, and adorned with some of the masterpieces of Velasquez and Murillo, and there, as I had hoped, I found Assunta, and alone. But oh, how changed! Nothing remained of the Assunta whom I remembered but the eyes, and they were larger, more intense, than ever. Those burning orbs in their deep blue hollows, the shrunken cheek, the bloodless lips, all gave me the impression of some inward fire consuming the frail lamp that held it. Her fingers seemed almost transparent, as I took the hand she ex-

tended and pressed it respectfully to my lips. She was magnificently dressed in a velvet robe, trimmed with fur, after the fashion of that day, against which the yellow white of her face and hands came out in yet more ghastly contrast. She evidently knew of my being in the house, for she manifested no surprise at seeing me; she was very calm, very silent; but a faint smile flickered on her face as I took her hand, and then it died out to reappear no more. As to myself, I could not speak. Though I had looked forward to this meeting so long, though I knew I should find her sadly changed, the sight of her affected me so painfully that I dared not trust my own voice. It was she who broke the silence.

"I am glad to see you again. I never expected to do so. It seems a long, long time since we met—much longer than it really is."

"I have so often wished to hear from you," I at last found voice to say.

"Ah, I never write to any one now!"

"Not even to Lena?"

"Not even to Lena."

"And why not? Why cut yourself off from all communication with friends who love you so truly?"

She paused a moment or two, deliberating, as it seemed to me, whether she should give the real reason. Then she said quietly:

"Because I have nothing to tell."

There was a chilling silence.

"And Mrs. Fleming and the children—do you never hear from them?"

"They write when they want anything, and Mr. Ridgway sends it."

She said this impassively, without a touch of bitterness, or even of regret. It was as though the springs of feeling were all frozen; and I saw that it would take long to thaw them. Mr. Ridgway entered, his well-turned legs displayed in small-clothes and silk stockings, which were then still worn by a few men; fragrant, and polished as ivory and ebony from head to foot. I fancied that he gave a quick, penetrating glance at Assunta; but he came forward without any embarrassment of manner, and from that moment to the hour of our retiring to rest, he kept up a constant fire of anecdote and quotation, happily needing but little assistance from me. He never addressed his wife, except to ask what she would take (those were the good old days of carving at table), and unless I spoke to her she remained absolutely silent. I appealed to her for an opinion whenever it was possible, in the hope of drawing her gradually into the conversation, but it was in vain; she sat there like a figure carved in stone, that by some mechanism is made to utter a monosyllable from time to time, and that is all. Nothing that was said awoke a smile, or any sign of interest on her face; and as soon as the dessert was set upon the table, she rose slowly and left the room. We sat late over our wine, for my host showed no inclination to return to the drawing-room, and I, who was impatient to return to Assunta, could not of course suggest a move. We found her sitting by the fire. I can see her now, the ruddy light upon her velvet dress, a fan of peacock's feathers in her hand, and the golden gloom of the Spanish leather background and richly carved frames. She did not turn her head, she did not move. There was something very terrible in this apathy. When the clock struck half-past ten she got up and took a small Roman lamp from the table. Then she held out her hand and turned towards the door. Mr. Ridgway gracefully sauntered up, and held it open for his wife.

"Good-night, Assunta."

"Good-night."

There was no kiss, no touch of any kind. She looked neither to the right nor to the left, but passed out, and the door closed behind her.

As soon as we were alone I observed a change in Mr. Ridgway. He was silent for certainly two or three minutes, passing his white hand to and fro across his chin, as he stared into the fire. Suddenly he looked up into my face, and with an expression upon his own so complicated that I found it impossible to read it, he said:

"You have not seen Mrs. Ridgway for some time. How do you think her looking?"

"Very ill. Sadly changed, if you ask me, Mr. Ridgway."

"Did she say anything to you before dinner?—before I came into the room?"

I returned his gaze steadily. "Very little."

"You observe that she is generally taciturn. But at times this is not the case. You are right, she is ill, Mr. Luttrell, and her malady is one which I fear is incurable. You are an old friend of hers, and you are now my guest for the next week at least. It is possible that in the course of that time Mrs. Ridgway may speak to you in a manner which renders it advisable that you should be prepared to receive what she says by a knowledge of her condition. Her

mind has lost its balance, and at moments she may be said to be absolutely insane."

I was speechless with horror and indignation. I did not believe what he said, though it at once flashed through my mind how plausible the tale might be made to look. I felt, however, the absolute necessity of mastering my emotion and concealing my real sentiments, if I wished to be of service to my unhappy friend; and, fortunately, I had sufficient self-command to let my face betray nothing. After a moment's pause, he continued:

"She has happily never needed restraint She is free to do what she likes, subject to certain restrictions, especially in the matter of receiving visitors alone. Her hallucinations have been such, and her speech so wild at times, that some precaution of this kind was necessary. But the servants have no idea of the truth. It is looked upon as my eccentricity."

"What medical advice have you had?" I asked.

"Doctor L. came from London expressly, when my suspicions were first aroused. He said the case was not an uncommon one of monomania. He held out very little hope of recovery, but said that her state might continue like this for years."

Here was chapter and verse. I was a little staggered, but I knew a brother of Doctor L.'s, and I resolved to test, at all events, the truth of his alleged visit. I said presently: "Did Doctor L. think a life of such absolute seclusion good for a person in this sad condition?"

"She must, above all, be subjected to no excitement. I have occasionally a friend or two to stay with me, when she is generally much as you saw her to-night. The last large party I had was about a year ago. I found it did her more harm than good. She talked very wildly to one of the ladies, who happened to name that wretched sot, young Walbrooke. After that, I determined to have no more parties."

"Have you ever communicated with her —her friends?"

"She has no *family*, as you know. Mrs. Walbrooke has been abroad for the last three years. I wrote to that poor creature Mrs. Fleming, to say that Assunta was in a highly nervous state, and unable to see her, and that, I thought, was sufficient, A woman like Mrs. Fleming would do her infinitely more harm than good."

"I fear, from your report," I said, dryly, "that nothing can do Mrs. Ridgway any good. On what subject, may I ask, do you consider that she is a monomaniac?"

"Chiefly on the subject of myself; but everything relating to the past, to the time when she lived at the Grange, is sure to excite her. As your acquaintance with Mrs. Ridgway belongs to that date, Mr. Luttrell, I hope you will be cautious, in any intercourse you may have with her, not to refer to that time. I may rely on you?"

"Mr. Ridgway, you may rely on my doing nothing to injure my poor friend, in whose sad case I feel the deepest interest."

He talked for some time longer on the same topic, and in the same strain. There was no affectation of deep feeling; it was the dispassionate tone of a philosopher, who does his best, under existing circumstances, and has made up his mind to every eventuality. And then we parted for the night. To me, I need hardly say, it was a sleepless one. So wretched an evening as that I had never passed. I lay awake, revolving in my mind how I might arrive at the truth in this affair, and, if it were possible, help this dear, unhappy lady. And in the morning I wrote (and posted with my own hand) the following note:

Hapsbury, Lincolnshire, March 5th.

DEAR L.,—Do me a great favour. Ask your brother whether he came down to the above address, eighteen months ago, to give an opinion on Mrs. Ridgway's case, and (if it be no breach of professional etiquette) what did he consider her ailment to be at that time? You will confer a lasting obligation on me if you can send me answers to these questions by return of post.

Yours, ever most faithfully,

GEOFFREY LUTTRELL.

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BOOK III.

CHAPTER II. CONFRONTED.

The room into which Madge was shown was a good specimen of that apartment which is called the "library," and which is to be found in the houses of all mushroom men of means, though the use to which it is put is extremely limited. There was a large and very handsome bookcase in polished mahogany, with plate-glass doors, filled with standard works, gorgeously bound and symmetrically arranged. The latest edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica was not too heavy, the newest high-priced novel was not too light, for the taste of the bookseller, to whom the charge of furnishing this collection had been committed. Mr. Kaulbach, the Anglicised German Jew, to whom the villa belonged, knew nothing of literature, but he bought his books as he bought his wines, horses, pictures, furniture, and other articles of luxury, from the man with the best name in the trade, and as he paid a good price, concluded he had been supplied with a good article. There was a large writing-table, also of mahogany, with a blue morocco leather top, guiltless of scratch or stain, an inkstand holding, on a moderate calculation, half a pint of ink, a sheaf of quill pens, and a stand of penholders of all kinds, odd little nick-nacks for holding matches and wax, silver owls with red glass eyes, gilt dogs' heads for paperweights, gilt ducks' heads with opening bills for letter-clips, and underneath the table, and by the side of the heavy oak chair, a dainty little basket, presumably intended for waste paper. It was altogether a place for show rather than use, and not one where anything like real work could be done. Mr. Kaulbach never proposed to himself to do any work in it. All his writing was carried on in a dingy little office, in a black little square out of Mincing-lane, on a high-shouldered, hacked, and ink-blotched desk, where he scrawled his cramped memoranda and smeary calculations, with the aid of a leaden inkstand and a corroded pen.

Madge looked about her with interest. Assuredly Philip Vane must have progressed in the world, as his present quarters were infinitely better than any which he had inhabited during her acquaintance with him. She had a kind of idea that Mr. Drage's notion might be correct, and that both Philip Vane and the lady, his engagement to whom had been publicly announced, were staying at the same country house together, and in another minute she would see him. He would be called away from the side of the rich prize he had recently won, to the presence of the woman whom he had so basely deserted. How would he bear the meeting, she wondered. He would be savage when he saw her, more savage when he knew the purpose for which she had come. As yet he had never struck her. Oftentimes, in the old days, she had thought that she could better have borne a blow from his hand than the scathing bitterness of his tongue; but that was long ago, when she was younger and stronger. Now she began to tremble at the mere thought of personal violence. She wished she had allowed Mr. Drage to accompany her; his presence would at least have prevented Philip Vane from indulging in any excessive outburst of wrath. The servants were moving about in the hall, and the doors of the room where the company were still evidently assembled at dinner were

open; that was a point in her favour Madge thought; from a sheer sense of decency Philip Vane would be compelled to put some curb upon his rage.

Who would he imagine was his visitor? The name which Madge had given to the servant was hers by right, but she had never used it, and so long and so completely had they been estranged that her husband would probably not think of her in connexion with it. Upon that utter oblivion of her, or, if that were wanting, upon his fear of creating a disturbance in his friend's house, Madge relied for her interview with her husband. The seeking of that interview was voluntary on her part, had not been decided upon until after full consideration and discussion, and must be gone through with now, even when she heard his step approaching the door.

Not his footstep after all, but, by its lightness and its fleetness, a woman's. Next moment the door opened and a woman entered the room. A woman of middle height, but full and rounded figure, set off with flowing draperies and clouds of delicate lace. Queenly in her walk and movements, and of a flashing and disdainful beauty, with large liquid dark eyes, clear cut aquiline profile, mouth undoubtedly small, but yet with full and sensuous lips, and a mass of lustrous black hair twisted into a coronet on her head. She swept into the room arranging the train of her dress with one hand, and with the other motioning to Madge, who had risen, to resume her chair.

"Pray be seated," said the lady, with a pleasant smile, and in a rich full voice; "you asked to see Mr. Vane, I believe?"

"I—I did," said Madge, nervous with surprise, and with her intuition of the identity of the person addressing her.

There was a singular contrast between these women. Madge pale as death, neatly, almost primly, dressed, nervous and ill at ease; the other with a glowing complexion, richly and tastefully attired, and perfectly self-composed.

"I am sorry," she said, "that you should have been misled by the stupid blunder of a servant. You were told that Mr. Vane was stopping in this house, but the fact is that he left here yesterday morning, having been summoned away by a telegram on business of importance."

"Is this true?" said Madge, half involuntarily.

The lady started and looked amazed, but said nothing.

"I beg your pardon," said Madge, "I did not mean to say that, I had no right to say it. Will Mr. Vane be long away?"

"I cannot say," said the lady, in an altered tone, "nor can I continue to hold a conversation with one who is a perfect stranger to me! Perhaps," she continued, rising, "perhaps you will leave your card, that Mr. Vane may have it on his return?"

"I have no card," said Madge, firmly, "but I gave my name to the servant, who showed me into this room."

"The man made a worse blunder than when he told you that Mr. Vane was staying here," said the lady, with curling lip, "for he announced you as Mrs. Vane."

"He delivered his message correctly in that instance, at least," said Madge, "for that was the name I gave him."

"You are a connexion of Mr. Vane's, I suppose?"

"I am."

"May I ask what connexion?"

"I am Philip Vane's wife."

Madge had steadied her voice for this announcement, and spoke very quietly, without the smallest trace of theatrical intonation, without the slightest gesture, each word clipping clearly and distinctly out of her lips.

The words thus quietly pronounced were not, however, without their effect; the lady who heard them seemed to reel, and leaned against the mantelpiece, before which she had been standing. For an instant she looked across at Madge dreamily, and with dazed eyes, repeating the words she had heard in a thick, low tone, "His wife did you say; Philip Vane's wife?"

"I am Philip Vane's wife," repeated Madge, in the same clear, merciless tone. "You, I conclude, are Mrs. Bendixen, the lady to whom, as the newspapers announced, my husband is about to be married. I am sorry," continued Madge, changing her tone, "to be compelled to interfere with your intended arrangements, but you will see that the step which you contemplated is impossible. I am Mrs. Philip Vane, and however poor my opinion may be of that position, I intend to claim and hold it for my own."

As she spoke she drew herself up, stamped her foot, and threw out her hand with a gesture which was familiar to her, and at which Philip Vane had so often sneered. There was defiance in that action, defiance in her kindling eyes, defiance in her ringing voice. Mrs. Bendixen, now thoroughly roused, leaned forward, looking eagerly at her visitor, but she had miscalculated the nature of the woman with whom she had

to deal, for she said, half querulously, half fiercely:

"How dare you speak to me in this way! How dare you come into my presence! I know what the world is, and what sort of lives men lead, and I dare say you have been accustomed to call yourself Mrs. Vane, and imagine you have a kind of right to do so; but of course there must be an end of that now. What do you look at me for in that way? Do you mean to say that you don't understand me?"

"I mean to say," said Madge, who had lapsed into stone again, and sat with her steady, cold, pitiless gaze on the other woman's face, "I mean to say you are talking in riddles, and that if you want me to comprehend you, you must speak more plainly."

"Then I tell you," said Mrs. Bendixen, in a loud and shrill tone, which she moderated, when she recollected the proximity of the hall, where the servants were still engaged—"then I tell you that I dare say you may have called yourself Mrs. Vane, because you were Mr.—Mr. Vane's mistress; that he gave you money, and perhaps kept a house for you, and—and was fond of you! I know such things go on, but," she added, the colour rising in her cheeks, and her eyes flashing, "there must be an end to all that! You have doubtless come here to ask for money? If so, you shall have it. I will take care of that, but you must not see Mr. Vane again, nor talk of yourself as his wife. You must not repeat that wicked lie!"

She paused and leaned forward eagerly to see the effect which her words had created. There was anxiety in her eyes, in the manner with which from time to time she moistened her lips, in the irrepressible fluttering motion of the hands which lay in her lap before her. By her words she had tried to impress on her visitor her own conviction of the truth of her statement; but her look and her involuntary action had the opposite effect.

"What I have said," said Madge, still holding her with her eyes, "is no lie, but God's truth! The lies which have been told you in this matter have come from him, not from me! I am Philip Vane's lawful wife! Of that fact I can give you proofs—but there is no need of that," she said, changing her tone, "I see you know it now, as you listen to me. Look at me! If you really have such a knowledge of the world as you profess, you will recognise at once that I am not of the stuff of which mistresses are made—I am Philip Vane's wife! Do you believe me?"

"I—I almost fear I do," said Mrs. Bendixen, still bending forward in her chair, and gazing at the pale, grave face and neat figure before her.

"It matters little to me whether you do or do not," said Madge, with a slight curl of her lip, "the fact remains, and can be proved at any moment. Now listen to me! When you tried to persuade yourself that my assertion was a lie, and that I was —what you said—you pretended to think that I had come here for money. What do you think, now, is the motive of my visit?"

"I—cannot tell," stammered Mrs. Bendixen, "unless it is revenge. You seem a dreadfully determined woman."

"Do I?" said Madge, as the faint glimmer of a contemptuous smile passed across her face. "I do not think that I am dreadfully determined; I am perfectly sure that I have no desire for revenge. Revenge on whom? On you? You have been passive in this matter; your part has been merely that of the dupe! On Philip Vane? One cannot be revenged on the dead, and Philip Vane is as dead to me as if I had seen him in his shroud."

"Oh, don't talk in that dreadful manner," cried Mrs. Bendixen, with a moan, then covering her face with her hands, she added, "Oh, what do you want? why did you come here?"

"To save you from a worse fate even than that which has befallen me. Not that I care for you one straw; you are nothing to me, as he is nothing to me, and, so far as I am concerned, you might both of you have gone on your way unchecked and unwarned, but I do not choose to see this crime committed where I have the power of stopping it, and if it be stopped, Philip Vane will have his vanity to thank, and nothing else. That vanity is overweening; it led him to make public his conquest. He announced in the newspapers that he was engaged to be married to you, and thus I heard of it."

"I don't see what there was to induce Mr. Vane to put it in the newspapers!" moaned Mrs. Bendixen.

"Don't you?" said Madge. "I do. Your name, your position, and your attractions are well known in the world to which Philip Vane now belongs, and the fact of having secured them would tell undoubtedly in his favour. He meant to marry you as he had previously married me, for the sake of living upon you. But his last marriage would have proved infinitely more successful than his first. You were something to win; your beauty is self-

evident, your wealth and position generally acknowledged. When he married me, I was a poor actress in a country theatre, with sufficient good looks to win his eye, and a sufficient salary to keep him in tolerable comfort. They must have been poor enough, my appearance and my earnings, for when he had once possessed himself of both they had not enough attraction to induce him to acknowledge me as his wife, and so soon as he saw his way to effectually ridding himself, he deserted me: the ladder had served its purpose, he could afford to kick it down."

"I am sure you judge Mr. Vane most unjustly," said Mrs. Bendixen, raising her face from her hands. "He is the most generous of men. His affection for me is quite disinterested, and it is too, too cruel to speak of him in this way."

"When you have known him as long as I have known him, I will ask you for your verdict on his character," said Madge, quietly; "not that I expect that even then you would say of him what I say, for you would not have the cause."

"You allow that," cried Mrs. Bendixen; "that shows that he was not entirely to blame."

"It shows simply that you from your plenty can give him all he longs for, wealth, ease, luxury, the position in the eyes both of men and women to which he has aspired; while I from my poverty could only fend off hunger and cold, could only bar the door against the wolf, could only find the platform whence he should spring into competence, leaving me behind him. He deserted me because I could do so little, he will hold to you since you can do so much."

"And he shall hold to me," cried Mrs. Bendixen, springing to her feet; "your last words have thoroughly determined me. See here, woman. I believe all you say. There is something in your voice, in your manner, which prevents my disbelieving it, much as I wish to do so. But I tell you I love Philip Vane, love him with a fervour which you, with your pale puny passion, cannot for an instant imagine. He has become essential to my life, and I have never yet known what it was to have one aspiration checked, one wish thwarted. I have been married before, you know that. The man who took me from a boarding-school to be his wife gave me all that I then thought the world contained, power, riches, admiration. But it was not until after his death, it was not until I met Mr. Vane, that I knew the happiness of loving and being loved. Ah, do not take that happiness from me; do not, I implore you, dissipate that dream! You speak of yourself as one to whom the pleasures of life are at an end, but in your time you have enjoyed that greatest joy of all. Why then grudge it to me?"

"You are talking at random," said Madge, coldly, "and I am unable to follow you. What influence can I have over your future beyond pointing out to you the impossibility of the course you propose to yourself to pursue? What would you wish me to do?"

"To go away, anywhere, in any country, to hide yourself, and never to come near me again. The good luck which has attended me throughout my lifetime has prevented your seeing Mr. Vane to-day. The dreadful secret which you have just uttered is known to us alone. It must never go further, nay, more than that, he must never know that I am aware of its existence, never be reminded of it himself. I will buy it of you at what price you like. You have only to name the sum and it is yours."

"Supposing I were to do as you ask, how would your position be improved? You, with the gratified desires, and the unchecked wishes of which you have boasted, have purchased Philip Vane's love, or what is equivalent to it, and now wish to purchase my silence! Suppose I agree, how is your position improved? The world will believe you to be Philip Vane's wife, but you will know yourself——"

"Do you think I care what the world thinks of me or what I think of myself?" cried Mrs. Bendixen. "I tell you I love this man, and that I will not have him taken from me. Have you no understanding, have you no compassion?"

"I have no patience to listen to ravings which would be wearisome from a love-sick girl, but which are contemptible in a woman. I did not seek to be Philip Vane's judge, but fate seems to have appointed me to be his executioner. I have given you due warning, and I absolve myself if you choose to share his fate. Now let me pass. I will leave this place."

And she rose and dropped her veil, and drew her mantle round her.

"Stay!" said Mrs. Bendixen. "You must not leave in this manner. You have said that you care no longer for Philip Vane; that you regard him as dead to you; and yet you will not leave him to me! Ah, spare him, I implore you! I have looked forward so eagerly to the time when I should be his wife. I have reckoned so upon giving to him a love

which no one hitherto has been able to evoke, that if he is torn from me I shall go mad. Oh, see me at your feet and spare me!"

As she uttered these words she dropped from her chair on to her knees, and lifted her hands in supplication. The large tears welled into her upturned eyes, and her hair, which had become unfastened, hung about her pale face.

"It is a pretty picture," said Madge, dreamily, looking down on the woman at her feet, "and devotion such as this is certainly thrown away on its object. Come, madam!" she cried, "rouse yourself, and let us put an end to this scene. You ask me to let your marriage with my husband take place without opposition; even if I would, I am powerless to do so. The secret is not mine alone, but is in the keeping of those who have a greater regard for my position than I have myself, and who are determined that it shall not be thus wantonly outraged."

"You are implacable, then?" said Mrs. Bendixen, rising and throwing back her hair.

"I am merely indifferent," said Madge, coldly. "As indifferent to your fate as to his. I came here to warn him of the consequences of the act which he contemplated, and I found you in his place. In those consequences you are equally interested, and my warning has been given to you. My duty is done. Let me pass!"

"One moment yet," cried Mrs. Bendixen. "Will the fact that you have given this warning to me content you? Will you swear that you will seek no further opportunity of letting him know your intentions towards him?"

"I see your meaning now," said Madge, looking straight at her with cold unsparing eyes. "Your passion for this man has so demented you, that you will hurry on this marriage, which will be no marriage, and accept yourself the position which you imputed to me at the commencement of our interview. Is not that so?"

"I do not deny it," said Mrs. Bendixen, excitedly. "I have set my mind upon it, and I will carry it through. I should glory in——"

"You are mad!" interrupted Madge. "Do you not see that if you were married to Philip Vane, and that marriage were proved illegal, he would be a convicted felon? Or even suppose he evaded the law, his position would be lost, his power and prestige, all that makes life pleasant to him, gone for ever! You have romantic dreams, I suppose, of some sunny paradise, where you and he could live and love for ever. He would weary of you in a month, and when he found that you had been warned in time of the impending danger, and had neglected to inform him of it, he would kill you!"

"He might," said Mrs. Bendixen, "he might kill me then; at least I should have known his love."

"And with that charming sentiment we will close the discussion," said Madge, slightly shrugging her shoulders. "Hear my last words, for we shall never meet again. The man for whom you are sacrificing yourself is treacherous and base, mean and cowardly. He has not even the one redeeming virtue of independence, but so soon as he gets the opportunity, will live on you as he lived on me, and as he abandoned me he will, should it so suit his purpose, abandon you. I was young and inexperienced when I became his victim, you are a matured woman of the world, and have, besides, my example before you, and I warn you to profit by it. If you fall it will be with your eyes open, and in defiance of the hands spread forth to hold you back. But you will fall, for you are a woman and infatuated!"

She turned the handle of the door as she uttered these last words, and let herself out. Mrs. Bendixen made a faint effort to detain her, but Madge drew her clinging dress more closely round her, and, with the faintest inclination of her head, passed by. The hall was empty now, as, she could see through the open door, was the dining-room. On the croquet-lawn a few players were idly knocking about the balls, and under the verandah, immediately outside the hall-door, some gentlemen were seated in lounging-chairs, smoking and drinking. One or two of them raised their hats as she passed by, and each of them honoured her with a hearty stare.

Madge passed steadily on, outwardly calm and grave, inwardly perturbed and excited.

"It is over," she said to herself. "I have discharged my duty, satisfied the promptings of my conscience, and obeyed the bidding of Mr. Drage. What has been gained by so doing is another matter; little enough, I should imagine. That woman, ignorant, unschooled, and impulsive, is madly in love, and will allow nothing to come between her and her object. Strange that I should have seen her, and that he—called away suddenly, she said he was, called away by telegram on important

business. By telegram! that must have been the message, a copy of which Rose forwarded to me, and which I have here."

She drew the paper from her pocket, opened it, and held it out before her. The addresses, both of sender and receiver, were plain and legible, but the rest of the text was in cipher, a hopeless mass of letters, jumbled together, and broken up into short impossible words.

"I feel certain that there is something of importance herein," said Madge. "I cannot tell why, but I am certain of it. If I could only find a key to this cipher! I must, and I will."

BOOKS WRITTEN IN PRISON.

This title suggests a somewhat remarkable group of literary productions. There are many "prison books," compositions wrought out by the brains of luckless persons shut away from the usages and facilities of every-day life, and seeking some mode of occupying the mind that may avert melancholy madness. Isaac D'Israeli collected many examples of books written while the authors were in prison; Mr. Langford has since given fuller details of some of the men who wrote them; while other instances are only waiting for bookish people to ferret them out.

The great Boethius was a shining light among these writers. He was a Roman philosopher, in the days when the once great Roman Empire had begun to fall to pieces, and was rapidly going into extinction. He was learned among the learned at Rome and at Athens; he was thrice consul under Theodoric the Goth; but his rigorous impartiality as a judge raised him up enemies among the intriguers at court, who falsely accused him of maintaining a treasonable correspondence with the Byzantine or Greek government at Constantinople. He was cast into prison, and there kept until an executioner did his fell work. While in captivity, Boethius wrote a work which afterwards became renowned throughout Europe, the Consolations of a Philosopher. It is a noble, lofty-minded production, which was some four centuries or so later translated into English by Alfred the Great.

One of the examples is singular, because we know the name of the book, although ignorant of the name of the man. This is Fleta. It consists of a treatise or commentary on law, supposed to have been written during the days of the Plantagenets by a prisoner in the Fleet. It suggested an imitation and an imitator. When Sir John Pettus was incarcerated in that same prison in 1683, he translated from the German a work on metals and metallurgy, and gave it the fanciful title of Fleta Minor.

During the sixteenth century, when there was a plentiful crop of distinguished prisoners and imprisonments in most European countries, books written by the captives were rather numerous. Maggi, an Italian scholar, mathematician, and military archæologist, rendered himself famous by his defence of Famagusta against the Turks, during which he invented ingenious machines which destroyed their works; but when the Turks afterwards succeeded in capturing the city, they took revenge on him by carrying him off in chains to slavery. Working hard as a slave during the day, he bravely conquered despondency at night by writing De Tintinnabulis, a treatise on bells. Our own Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, a gallant and chivalrous soldier, but a little wild withal, got himself into prison on more than one occasion for satirical hints at persons in power, and infractions of the civic rules of government in London. While in the Fleet Prison he wrote some of the sweetest songs and sonnets in the language. When afterwards imprisoned in Windsor Castle, for daring (as was alleged) to aspire to the hand of the Princess Mary, he wrote his Prisoned in Windsor Castle, which contains a charming reminiscence of days when he played at that same castle with a king's son for his companion, ending with two lines which have often been quoted for their deep meaning:

> With remembrance of their greater grief,
> To banish the less I find the chief relief.

A widely different man was Father Thomas, member of the Order of Hermits of Saint Augustine. He was imprisoned by the Moors in Africa, and wrote in Portuguese on the Sufferings of Our Lord Jesus Christ. He had no books, and could write only for a short time in the middle of each day, by a gleam of light that entered his dungeon through an air-hole. A different man, again, was George Buchanan, poet and historian, who seems to have been always at war with monks, and getting into trouble for abusing them. He was imprisoned in Portugal, about the middle of the century, for one of these attacks, and while in captivity wrote his Paraphrase on the Psalms of David. On the other hand, there was the Jesuit missionary, Robert Southwell, who, during about ten years of Elizabeth's reign, was imprisoned

over and over again. During the last imprisonment which preceded his execution, he wrote his Saint Peter's Complaint, and other impassioned religious poems.

Knowing what we do of the state of England during the reigns of James the First and Charles the First, we shall not be surprised at finding that most of the men who wrote books in English prisons during the first half of the seventeenth century were incarcerated either on religious or political grounds. There was James Howell, a writer and politician, who had a long imprisonment, during which he wrote Familiar Letters and other works, by the proceeds of which he supported himself. There was Richard Lovelace, the cavalier and poet. He was first a Charter-house boy, then an Oxford collegian, then a courtier, then a colonel in the service of Charles the First. He spent all his patrimony in support of the Stuarts, and formed a regiment at his own expense. Committing the unpardonable offence of presenting a petition to the House of Commons praying for the restoration of the king's rights, he was committed to prison at the Westminster Gatehouse, where he wrote his Althea. This is the poem that contains the famous lines:

> Stone walls do not a prison make,
> Nor iron bars a cage;
> Minds innocent and quiet take
> That for an hermitage;
> If I have freedom in my love,
> And in my soul am free,
> Angels alone, that soar above,
> Enjoy such liberty!

Again, some few years afterwards, he was imprisoned, and during his incarceration wrote a collection of sonnets and songs, including the beautiful Address to Lucasta, which contains the often-quoted lines:

> I could not love thee, dear, so much,
> Lov'd I not honour more.

Poor Lovelace! Wood describes him as being "accounted the most amiable and beautiful person that eyes ever beheld;" but his imprisonments and loss of fortune made the closing years of his life years of penury.

There was Thomas Lydiat, a learned clergyman and historian, who was thrown into the King's Bench as a means of curing him of his loyalty to Charles the First, and who, while there, wrote his Annotations on the Persian Chronicle. There was Sir William Davenant, who, similarly offensive to the parliament on account of his loyalty to the king, was thrown into Carisbrook Castle, where he wrote some of his plays and poems. On the other hand, there was George Withers, farmer, lawyer, poet, satirist, and soldier in turn. He wrote Abuses Stript and Whipt, a satire which earned for him an imprisonment; and in later years, after having fought for and with the Puritans, he was subjected to a still longer imprisonment by the Royalists. He complained bitterly afterwards of his treatment in prison. "I was shut up from the society of mankind, and, as one unworthy the compassion vouchsafed to thieves and murderers, was neither permitted the use of my pen, the access or sight of my acquaintances, the allowance usually afforded to other close prisoners, nor means to send for necessaries befitting my present condition; by which means I was for many days compelled to feed on nothing but the coarsest bread, and sometimes locked up for twenty-four hours together, without so much as a drop of water to cool my tongue; and being at the same time in one of the grossest extremities of dulness that ever was inflicted upon anybody, the help both of physician and apothecary was denied me." Nevertheless, in his Shepherd's Hunting, written during one of his captivities, there are some of the finest lines known on the consolation which poetry afforded him in time of trouble. There was John Selden, too, the learned jurist, antiquary, and historian, who got into trouble with Charles the First for writing against the divine rights and prerogatives of kings; he had frequent and stern reason for knowing what the inside of a prison was like, and wrote one of his erudite histories while incarcerated.

But the two most celebrated men who come into the list of writers of books in prison in the first half of the seventeenth century are Raleigh and Cervantes. The gallant Sir Walter, after serving when young as a gentleman-volunteer, went with Sir Humphry Gilbert to America, returned and was knighted, raised a volunteer squadron against the Spanish Armada, and became a courtier. Something he did or said gave offence at court, and he resided abroad for some years. When Elizabeth died, and James the First succeeded to the throne, Raleigh returned to England; but he was arrested, and found guilty of treason by a packed jury. Twelve years of his life were passed continuously in prison; and here he wrote his History of the World, a marvellous work to execute under such circumstances. In order really to begin at the beginning, he begins with the Creation, and gravely discusses the opinions expressed by the learned, as to whether Paradise was as high

up as the moon, or only as high as mid-air, or under the equinoctial line. But still the History of the World is a noble fragment, which could only have been written by one who had read much, thought much, and travelled much. Hapless Raleigh! King James hated him with all the hatred which a narrow mind feels towards an intellectual superior, and sent him to the scaffold. The other great man, whose name we have coupled with Raleigh, was the Spanish novelist Cervantes, the author of the world-renowned Don Quixote. He was first a student, then chamberlain to a cardinal, and then a soldier. He was thrice wounded at the battle of Lepanto, was taken prisoner by the corsairs, kept five years in captivity, and ransomed by his friends. Returning to Spain, he married, entered upon civil employments, traversed wide regions of his native country, and watched well the habits and peculiarities of his countrymen. Monetary embarrassments, rather than political or religious discord, threw him more than once into prison; but this imprisonment was a great thing for the world, since it was occupied by the planning and commencement of Don Quixote.

Open the portals wide: let us admit the greatest prison-writer of the second half of the seventeenth century, John Bunyan, tinker, preacher, and author of a religious allegory which is said to have been translated into a greater number of languages than any other book in the world, with two exceptions, the Bible and the Imitation of Christ. He was thrown into Bedford Jail because he would not renounce dissent; and there he supported himself for twelve years by making tagged boot-laces. He wrote many controversial tracts, preached to his fellow-prisoners, and read to them the Bible and Fox's Book of Martyrs. It was a fine answer that he gave to the clerk of the peace, who advised him to gain his liberation by recanting. "Sir, the law hath provided two ways of obeying; the one, to do that which I in my conscience believe I am bound to do actively; and when I cannot by activity, then I am willing to lie down, and to suffer whatever they shall do unto me." And it showed a vein of humour in his character when he replied to a Quaker who had come to visit him, and who declared that the Lord had ordered him to search for Bunyan in half the prisons in England, "If the Lord had sent you, you need not have taken so much trouble to find me out; for the Lord knows that I have been a prisoner in Bedford Jail for the last twelve years." He wrote the first part of the Pilgrim's Progress while in prison, a fact that ought to endear his imprisonment to us.

It is a singular coincidence that the authors of two of the most extensively read books ever written were living in the same country and at the same time, and wrote some of their works while in captivity. Daniel Defoe lived at the same time as John Bunyan; but the latter had reached middle age while the former was still a boy. Defoe, as a Whig and a dissenter, was often in trouble, and on one occasion suffered the pillory as well as imprisonment. While in prison he wrote his Hymn to the Pillory, and commenced a political periodical which he continued to several volumes. His immortal Robinson Crusoe, however, was not written during imprisonment. Over in France, Abraham Wicquefort, a Dutch diplomatist and writer, was for thirty years representative of the court of Brandenburg at Paris; he was then thrown into the Bastille by Cardinal Mazarin, on suspicion of being a spy; and while in the gloomy fortress prison wrote his Mémoires touchant les Ambassadeurs, and l'Ambassadeur et ses Functions. Then there was Voltaire, who had a year's incarceration for a satirical poem on Louis the Fourteenth; and another of less length for an unseemly quarrel at the Duc de Sully's house; during this second captivity he planned and wrote the greater part of his epic poem Le Henriade. Next was Nicholas Fréret, a French historian, who in his first work, on the Origin of the French, so offended the vanity of his countrymen that he was sent to the Bastille, where he planned many of his later works. Cardinal Polignac, another Frenchman, instead of being sent to the Bastille, was placed in a kind of semi-imprisonment in his own abbey, for some offence during the regency of Louis the Fifteenth; there he wrote his Latin poem Anti-Lucretius, which a century later was translated into English by George Canning.

There was one book written in prison which brought but little credit to the author; namely, the Thoughts in Prison. Doctor William Dodd, a clergyman, a popular preacher, a chaplain to George the Third, and a welcome guest in high society, lived so extravagantly that he was always in debt. In an evil hour he offered a bribe of three thousand pounds to the wife of the Lord Chancellor if she would procure for him the rich living of St. George's, Hanover-square; this caused him a mortifying exposure, and the loss of his chaplaincy. In a still more evil hour, he forged the sig-

nature of his patron and former pupil, the Earl of Chesterfield, to a bond for four thousand two hundred pounds. He intended, like many other forgers before and since, to take up and cancel the bond in good time, but failed; and his end was tragical indeed. The Thoughts, which he wrote while in prison, have been characterised as "the spasmodic, hysterical, and insincere utterances of a weak man under affliction."

A triad of writers will exhaust the remaining space at our disposal; they were men who, in more recent times, owed their imprisonment to political circumstances, and who solaced themselves in captivity by writing books. One of these was the late James Montgomery. When a poor shop-boy he wrote poems, and gradually worked himself up to the position of helper, writer, and editor of a Sheffield newspaper. His writings as a liberal brought him into trouble during the exciting period of the great French Revolution; and during two imprisonments which he underwent he wrote his Ode to the Evening Star, Pleasures of Imprisonment, Verses to a Robin Redbreast, and other poems. The opening of the address to Robin adverts to his imprisonment:

> Welcome, pretty little stranger,
> Welcome to my lone retreat;
> Here, secure from ev'ry danger,
> Hop about, and chirp, and eat!
> Robin, how I envy thee,
> Happy child of liberty!

The late charming writer, Leigh Hunt, was in early life connected with newspaper editing; and, at a time when speaking the truth was often an offence against the law of libel, he penned some words which brought on him a two years' imprisonment. To that captivity we owe the Descent of Liberty and the Story of Rimini. One name more is that of Thomas Cooper, who, becoming involved in the Chartist troubles of the last generation, suffered two years' incarceration, during which he wrote a remarkable poem, the Purgatory of Suicides.

A CUBAN CONVENT.

CACHITA, my creole lover, has been immured five long months in a nunnery, expiating there her "sin" of secret love-making.* In another month she will be released, and restored to her stern parent, Don Severiano, if the nuns' report of her be favourable; but should the efforts of those estimable ladies prove unsuccessful, and Cachita persist in following the inclinations of her heart, the period for her incarceration will be protracted another six months, when, in accordance with conventual discipline, she will be required to commence her duties as novice.

Desirous of ascertaining how far monastic confinement has affected my lover's sentiments, I propose to sound her on the subject by private communication. This is not easily accomplished. The convent is a strong building. At fixed hours the outward doors are thrown open, and disclose a small stone ante-chamber, furnished with wooden benches like a prison. Here may a pilgrim enter, but no further. There is another and a stronger door communicating with the interior, and accessible only to a favoured few. Near it is a panelled or blind window, forming part of a torno or turnstile — a mechanical contrivance by means of which articles for the convent use are secretly admitted.

On more than one occasion have I visited the torno in the vain hope of persuading the invisible door-keeper behind to receive some love-tokens for my captive mistress. Tapping three times on the hollow window I pause until a voice murmurs, "Ave Maria!" to which I respond, being well versed in conventual watchwords, "Por mio pecados!" The voice inquires my pleasure. If it be my pleasure to have a missive conveyed to an immured "sister," and I can satisfy my unseen interlocutor by representing myself as a relative of the captive lady in whom I am interested, the turnstile rotates with magic velocity, the flat panel vanishes, and, behold, a species of cupboard with many shelves, upon which anything of a moderate size may be placed. Having deposited my letter on one of the shelves, it disappears, with the cupboard, like a pantomime trick, and the panelled window resumes its original dull aspect. But whether my document will reach the rightful owner I can never ascertain, for days elapse, and no reply is forthcoming. Varying my proceedings at the torno I sometimes express a desire to exchange a few greetings with my cloistered sister by meeting her in a certain chamber appointed for such a purpose, and conversing with her through a double grating. But the door-keeper informs me that such a privilege is accorded only to parents of the immured, who can prove their identity; so my effort in that direction is a failure.

Every Sunday morning I visit the convent chapel which is attached to the building itself, and is open to the public at prescribed

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. vi. p. 418.

hours. The chapel is a bare-looking sanctuary of small dimensions, and easily crowded by a score or two of ladies with white veils, who come to pay their devotions from the neighbouring houses. At one extremity of the whitewashed chamber is an altar-piece, before which a priest, assisted by a boy, officiates, and to the left is a strongly barred window connected with the interior of the convent. Behind this window, which is heavily curtained as well as railed, stand the nuns and other inmates of the cloister, who have come to take part in the ceremonies. The responses are chanted by this invisible congregation in a subdued tone. During a certain portion of the ceremonies the curtain is partially drawn, and the outline of a thickly veiled nun is discerned as she bends forward to kiss the priest's hand and to receive his blessing. I envy the ecclesiastic, and gaze with eager interest as figure after figure approaches in turn; but my sight cannot penetrate the dark recesses of the curtain, and the lady whom I seek comes and disappears unrecognised.

I am aroused early one morning by a black messenger, who delivers me a thick letter, which I open nervously, for I find it comes from the "Convento de la Ensenanza." The writing, though the contents savour strongly of monastic diction, is certainly in Cachita's hand, and is signed by herself.

"My dream of happiness," the letter begins, "can no longer be realised. My conscience, my teachers, and my father-confessor all persuade me that I have sinned in the outer world, and that if I desire to be absolved I must repent without delay. Exhorted by the worthy nuns, I am daily becoming more alive to a sense of my unworthiness, and convinced of the urgent necessity for beginning a new life of holiness and virtue. Guided to this blessed convent by the finger of Providence, I have been enabled, with the assistance of the best of counsel, to reflect seriously over what has happened, and I have now taken a vow never again to act from the impulse of my young and inexperienced heart."

After dwelling upon the enormity of the offence of making love without the approval of a parent, the writer exhorts me, by my "mother," and by other people whom I "hold dear," to return her letters, and all other evidence of the past, with the assurance that by so doing I shall accomplish one important step towards the "termination of the sad story of this ill-begotten wooing." The letter concludes as follows:

"Perhaps you will receive a parting word from me" (the present document occupies exactly eight pages of closely written convent paper), "which will put an end to this unfortunate story. You must, then, forget me entirely. Look upon the past as a dream, an illusion, a flash of happiness which is no more. Never must the name of Cachita escape your lips. I shall remember you only in my prayers" (the word "only" is erased with pencil). "Fail not to send the letters. And adios! till we meet in heaven.—CARIDAD."

The bearer of this letter is Guadalupe, a slave of Cachita's father, Don Severiano, and she is intrusted with messages to and from the convent. Twice a week she visits the torno cupboard, charged with changes of linen and other articles for her young mistress's use. Everything is carefully examined by a nun before being consigned to its owner; so my ingenious notion of conveying by this opportunity something contraband to my lover, cannot be entertained.

Having bribed Guadalupe with a bundle of cigars and a coloured handkerchief for a turban, I obtain from her in return some intelligence of her young mistress.

"Have you heard how La Niña Cachita fares?" I inquire.

"Badly," says the negress. "The monastic life does not agree with her lively disposition, and she yearns for freedom again, la pobre!"

"Then the nuns have not succeeded in converting her?"

"I think not, miamo. In a letter to her mother, Doña Belen, who has still a good opinion of your worship, mi amita Cachita ridicules the Monjas (nuns), and describes their strange ways."

"Has Don Severiano expressed his intention to release La Niña at the expiration of her allotted six months?"

"I believe so, and in that case La Cachita will be with us again in less than four weeks."

The most important information which I draw from the communicative black is, that my friend, Don Ignacio, the dentist, is attending my lover for professional purposes. I resolved to call upon Don Ignacio, and when Guadalupe has taken her departure with a packet containing a selection from Cachita's letters, and one of my own, which I have carefully worded, in case it should fall into wrong hands, I repair at once to the house of my dentist friend.

Don Ignacio sympathises with me, and promises to aid me in a plan which I have conceived for communicating by letter with

my absent mistress; but he warns me that there are many difficulties in the way of doing so.

"The nuns," he says, "who accompany my patient, stand like a couple of sentinels on each side of her, and no word or gesture escapes their attentive ears and watchful gaze. He must have more than a conjurer's hand who can perform any epistolary feat and escape their keen observation."

The allusion to conjuring reminds me of my scheme.

Will the friendly dentist recommend to his patient a box of his registered tooth-powder?

He will be delighted to have that opportunity.

"One of my assistants who accompanies me in my convent rounds shall include such a box in my dentist's bag."

Don Ignacio sees through my "little powder plot," as he calls it, and hands me a box of his patented tooth-powder, beneath which I afterwards carefully deposit a billet-doux.

But Don Ignacio can improve upon my scheme, and staggers me with his new idea.

"You shall deliver the box yourself!" says he.

The convent rules, he explains, allow him to introduce an assistant, or "practicante," as he is called. The same practicante does not always accompany him in his semi-weekly visits to the convent.

"On this occasion only," says the considerate dentist, "you shall be my practicante."

Early next morning we are on the threshold of the sacred ground. Don Ignacio boldly enters the stone antechamber, which I have so often timidly approached, and taps with a firm knuckle on the torno.

"Ave Maria Purisima!" murmurs the door-keeper from behind.

"Pecador de mi!" replies the practised don.

"Que se ofrece usted?" (what is your pleasure?) inquires the voice. And when the dentist has satisfied the door-keeper's numerous demands, a spring door flies open and we step into a narrow passage. Here we remain for some moments, while our persons are carefully identified through a perforated disc. Then another door opens, the mysterious door-keeper appears and conducts us into the very core of the convent. As we look over the convent garden, which is tastefully laid out with tropical plants and kitchen stuff, a thickly veiled nun approaches us. The lady seems to be on familiar terms with the dentist, whom she addresses in a mild, soothing tone, as if she were administering words of comfort to a sick person. We follow her through a narrow corridor, where I observe numerous doors, which I am told give access to the apartments or cells occupied by the convent inmates. We pass a chamber where children's voices are heard. There is a school attached to the convent for the benefit of those who desire their offspring to receive religious instruction from the nuns. Music and fancy needlework are also taught, and some of the distressed damsels, who, like Cachita, are undergoing a term of conventual imprisonment for similar offences, impose upon themselves a mild form of hard labour by assisting to improve the infant mind. Cachita, who is a good musician, takes an active part in this branch of education.

At last we are ushered into a gloomy, whitewashed apartment (everything in the convent appears to be of wood and whitewash), where our guide takes leave of us.

While the dentist, assisted by his practicante, is arranging his implements for tooth-stopping on a deal table, which, together with a couple of wooden chairs, constitute the furniture of this cheerless chamber, an inner door is thrown open, and a couple of nuns, attired in sombre black, enter with Don Ignacio's fair patient. Cachita is dressed in spotless white, a knotted rope suspended from her girdle, and a yellowish veil affixed in such a manner to her brow as completely conceals her hair, which, simple practicante though I be, I know is dark, soft, and frizzled at the top. Her pretty face is pale, and already wears (or seems to wear) the approved expression of monastic resignation.

Following Don Ignacio's suggestion, I carefully conceal my face while Cachita seats herself between the sentinel nuns.

The dentist, with a presence of mind in which I participate but little, commences his business of tooth-stopping, pausing in his work to exchange a few friendly words with his patient and the amicable nuns. Hitherto my services have not been in requisition; but anon the subject of the tooth-powder is introduced.

Will La Cachita allow the dentist to recommend her a tooth-powder of his own preparation?

Cachita is in no immediate need of such

an article, but the dentist is persuasive, and the young lady is prevailed upon to give the powder a trial.

"You will derive much benefit from its use," observes Don Ignacio. "My assistant" (and here the cunning tooth-stopper, being close to his patient's ear, whispers my name)" will bring it you presently."

"What ails La Niña?" inquires one of the nuns, bending forward; for Cachita has uttered a cry, and swooned away.

"Nothing, señora," says Don Ignacio, with the same sang froid already noted. "Only a nerve which I have accidentally excited in my operation. She will be better presently."

The dentist desires me to bring him a certain bottle, and with the contents of this his patient is soon restored to consciousness.

"Keep her head firm," says my artful friend, addressing me with a faint smile on his countenance, "while I put the finishing touches to my work."

I obey; and though my hands are far from being as steady as an assistant's should be, I acquit myself creditably.

Cachita's mouth is again open to facilitate the dentist's operations, but also, as it seems to me, in token of surprise at the apparition now bending over her.

"You will find much relief in the use of this tooth-powder," continues my friend, in a careless tone, as though nothing had happened. "Very strengthening to the gums. When you have got to the bottom of the box—just open your mouth a little wider—when you have got to the bottom of the box, where" (he whispers) "you will find a note, I will send you another."

Cachita, by this time accustomed to my presence, can now look me fearlessly in the face with those expressive eyes of hers, which I can read so well, and before the dentist's operations are over, we have contrived, unobserved, to squeeze hands on three distinct occasions.

Assured by this means of my lover's constancy, I now take my leave of her, and patiently await the term of her convent captivity, which expires in three weeks' time.

THE RETURN.

JULIETTA! Julietta!
All around is still as sleep,
'Neath the stars the town lies silent,
And thy mother slumbers deep.

Sad and weary, worn and yearning,
Back from battle come I now,
All the dreadful war is over,
And the laurel decks my brow.

Julietta! Julietta!
'Tis Alphonso speaks, my dear!
Canst thou slumber on so soundly
While thy lover stands so near?

"Who is that whose hollow accents
Break my first sleep sweet and bright?
Who is he beneath my window
Standing ghostlike in the night?"

Julietta! Julietta!
'Tis Alphonso who doth wait;
Come again and speak unto him
Here beside thy garden gate.

"'Tis some thief and not Alphonso,
'Tis some robber in disguise.
Even if thou wert Alphonso,
It is far too cold to rise."

Julietta! Julietta!
By our parting, by our pain,
Here beneath the stars of heaven,
Let me kiss thy lips again.

"Hush and go away this midnight,
Come again to-morrow morn;
If our prying neighbours heard thee
They would hold me up to scorn."

Julietta! Julietta!
If indeed it must be so,
Reach me out thy hand, my dearest,
Let me kiss it ere I go.

"Hush, I hear some one approaching,
Go away, for I am ill,
I am very sick and sleepy,
Come to-morrow—if you will."

Ha, thou false one! Now full surely
I perceive the news is right;
Seven long years I have been faithful
In the day and in the night.

Seven long years I have remembered
Since we on this spot did part,
Yet already to another
Thou hast given away thy heart.

"My poor heart I have not given,
And I kept it safe for you;
At last Antonio came and stole it,
And alas! what could I do?"

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

SIX DAYS IN A CANVAS BOAT.

IN the month of June, 1639, a worthy young Puritan trader, named William Okeley, set sail from Gravesend for the Island of Providence, in the West Indies, on board the sloop Mary of London, which was laden with linen and cloth, and carried six guns and about sixty seamen and passengers.

The stars from the first looked malignly on the Mary. After waiting for five weeks in the Downs for a wind, Mr. Boarder, the master, set sail, but let go the anchor off the Isle of Wight. "The next Lord's Day," setting sail again, they ran on the sands, but the tide coming in, they luckily hove off. The land after all would have been a better friend to them, even though a sand shoal, than the open sea. There were two other sloops in the good company of the Mary, and one of them carried nine guns. The sixth day, after the chalk cliffs

had gone down below the horizon, the crew of the Mary were startled at dawn (for at that time the sea swarmed with robbers) by seeing three ships about three or four leagues to leeward. After some consultation the master of the Mary decided not to run, but to stay and speak to them. The three ships soon looming larger, proved to be Moorish men-of-war, who quickly bore down on them. The master of the Mary resolved at first to fight, then too late weakly tried to run, which vacillating councils were ended at daybreak by the Moors, after a short skirmish, boarding and taking the three sloops. In the Mary six men were slain, and many wounded. There were many English prisoners in the Moorish ship, and with these lamenting wretches the new comers to purgatory condoled, and, during the five weeks afloat, learnt from them scraps of lingua-franca likely to be useful in the days to come of slavery in Algiers.

Arrived in Algiers, they were locked for the first night in a filthy cellar, and the next day were driven to the viceroy's palace, that potentate having, by right of office, a claim to every tenth slave captured by the Moorish galleys. The next market-day they were dragged to the market-place. The slaves were led up and down the market, and when any one made a bid the owner shouted, "Arache! arache! there is so much bid, who'll bid more?" Then the cautious purchaser looked at their teeth, felt their limbs, and by their beard and hair tried to guess their age, giving more if the slave had white and tender hands, since from gentlemen and merchants they expected large sums for ransom. All this time the man who bid decried the slave, the dealer, on the other hand, praised him; his chest, his shoulders, his strength, his growth, his intelligence, his skill, or his temper. The sale effected, the slave was driven back to the viceroy to first see if he cared to take him at the price offered.

The first market-day Okeley was sold to a Tangerine merchant of Moro-Spanish descent, and for half a year was employed in trudging on errands and carrying burdens. At the end of this time his patron's man-of-war, sweeping the Mediterranean, captured an English merchant vessel laden with plate from Spain, and he resolved to fit her with more guns, and start her as a corsair. Okeley was employed to help the carpenters and shipwrights engaged on this work. But now came the sharpest trial. One day the stern patron told Okeley he must go in the new ship. In vain he pleaded he was no mariner; in vain he argued with his own sensitive conscience whether he could without sin fight against Christians. His court of conscience was abruptly broken up by his patron's command to put to sea at once; but the Moor gave Okeley money, clothes, and provisions, and he was, by his orders, treated with some mercy. In nine weeks up and down the Straits, the corsair only picking up one prize, an Hungarian-French man-of-war, the Moor called Okeley back to land, and ordered him to earn him two dollars every month. It seemed impossible—bricks without straw, interest without principle—there was but one conclusion, says Okeley, "to commit myself to God, who had brought me into this strait, beseeching Him to bring me out of it." Okeley first applied to an English slave, who kept a tailor's shop, feeling, as he wisely said, "that nothing that was honest could be base, and that necessity would ennoble a far meaner employment." The man readily closed with him, and Okeley's heart grew larger, for he felt that he could now escape the lash; "but God had not tried him enough," he adds, for the next day the tailor meanly backed out of his promise. Wandering about forlorn, he scarcely knew or cared whither, Providence directed him to another English slave sitting in a cheery way in a perfectly bare shop. Okeley disconsolately told him his story, and the good-natured fellow at once invited him to become a partner. It appeared that the man was driving a good but secret trade with unorthodox Moors in strong waters and wine, selling, besides, tobacco, lead, iron, and shot. His new friend lent Okeley some money to trade with, and to this the latter added a small sum he had concealed. The world smiled on the two slaves; they bought a butt of wine, and divided the profits of this business every week; but prosperity soon turned the head of Okeley's partner, and he grew drunken and idle. At this juncture it fell out that there one day came straggling to the shop John Randall, a brother sailor of Okeley's. He and his wife and child were slaves, and had to beg to earn the dollars remorselessly exacted from them by their patron. Okeley's good heart warmed to his old comrade: "I could not," he says, "but consider the goodness of God to me that I should now be in a condition to advise and help another which so lately wanted both myself, and it had this operation on me that

I would not suffer a poor distressed countryman—a fellow-captive, a fellow-Christian—to stand begging at that door where I had so lately stood myself. Shall I shut the door of my heart upon him, I thought, when God has opened a door of hope to me in the day of my trouble? Shall I so requite the Lord's kindness to me?" Okeley, therefore, kindly bade the man in, and set him to make canvas clothes for slaves, letting him remain in the shop rent free.

So passed four irksome years of slavery, till Okeley grew almost inured to misery, yet still, like a good Calvinist, lamenting that there was no one to "preach the Word." At last an English ship was taken by the corsairs, and among the slaves was a Mr. Devereux Sprat, a sober, grave, religious "minister of the gospel," whose monthly toll to his patron, Okeley and some other zealous slaves agreed to provide. Three times a week this "godly faithful servant of Christ" prayed to three or four score Christian slaves in a cellar which Okeley had hired as a store-room. This, he says, strengthened his faith and comforted his drooping spirit.

One day Randall, not feeling well, he and Okeley took a walk along the sea-shore, beyond the mile-tether allowed to slaves. Seized by a spy, and accused of attempting to escape, Okeley was liberated, but poor Randall was condemned by his more relentless master to three hundred blows with the batoon (a tough short truncheon) on the soles of the feet.

Soon after this, Okeley's padrone, disabled by losses in privateering, was compelled to sell his slaves, whom he had long before mortgaged, to a cap-maker and an old farmer. The two men cast lots for Okeley; he trembled lest he should fall to the "brutish ill-humoured cap-maker;" but Heaven was merciful to the poor Puritan, and he became the property of the farmer, a good compassionate man, who regarded him with confidence, and treated him like his own son. But his new patron's farm was twelve miles from Algiers, and Okeley felt sure that the Moor intended to make him his bailiff and vicegerent there. Once there all hope of escape was gone, and he would be a slave for life. Fetters of gold are fetters still, so he resolved, with hope kindling in his heart, once for all to have a wrestle for freedom. With aching head he turned over every means of escape; at last, like a beam of sunshine, a plan, desperate but not impossible, suggested itself.

Having drawn out mentally a rough sketch of it, the brave and resolute man confided it to Mr. Sprat, the minister, who gravely pronounced it possible, that was all he could say. Then Okeley broke it to another fellow-slave, Robert Lake, "a wise and religious person," an old man, who pronounced his blessing on it, and wished it "godspeed." Next he told his firm friend, John Randall, still sore from the batoon, who approved of it, yet would not run the fearful risk of its miscarriage, he having a wife and child. As for Robert Lake, he was too old to be useful, or to bear the fatigue, and as for Mr. Sprat, Captain Pack, of London, was already on his way with ransom to release him without danger. Okeley had still, therefore, to choose his companions. It was indispensable that they should be trusty, brave, religious, and strong men. The comrades he chose were, John Anthony, a carpenter, who had been a slave fifteen years; William Adams, a bricklayer, who had been a captive eleven years; John Jephs, a seaman, who had been five years among the Moors; John ——, a carpenter, who had served the same term, and two others. These, with Okeley himself, made a band of seven, and all eager for liberty, though not all equally resolute, before being told the scheme, took a solemn oath never to disclose it, directly or indirectly, for fear or flattery, whether they did or did not finally approve it. Then in the morbidly conscientious breast of this Puritan captain arose a thousand casuistic scruples as to whether it was justifiable to God and man to attempt an escape from a master who so dearly loved him, so courteously treated him, and had so fairly bought him. First he thought, should he better himself in England, where the civil war had now broken out; but then he thought of "England, liberty, and the gospel." Next, as to the theft of himself; but he soon, like a man of sense, shook off this sickly scruple, deciding that a man is too noble a creature to be made the subject of a deed of sale, moreover, his consent had not been asked, nor had he forfeited the rights of man. He would escape or die; the sweet word liberty already made music in his ears, and his longing heart danced to the tune of it, as he eloquently tells us in his narrative of the wonderful escape. But now all sorts of gloomy difficulties crowded in to discourage the honest conspirators. They must build a boat, but how or where could it be launched? how could they escape the cruel Argus eyes watching them by day? how escape by night from a high-walled

city, so strongly barred, so closely guarded? But Okeley's heart never faltered; he would allow of no fears; he laughed and trod under foot all cowardly suggestions of danger. "Let us be up and doing," he cried, with a hearty voice, and in his cheery homely way, "and God will be with us. Well begun is half done." In his own cellar the boat should be built piecemeal, so as to be easier of removal. Majorca was the place he thought fittest to land at. In his bright hope he already stood on that free rocky island shore, and the weakest nature drew strength and courage from him as from a deep clear fountain.

We will use his own simple words to describe the building of the boat.

"In the cellar," he says, with his usual fervid piety, "where we had worshipped God, we began our work, and it was not the holiness, but the privacy of the place that invited us, and advised us to it. And first, we provided a piece of timber about twelve feet long to make the keel; but because it was impossible to convey a piece of timber of that length out of the city but it must be seen, and that suspicion would bring us into examination, and the rack or batoon might extort a confession out of the most resolved and obstinate breast, we therefore cut it in two pieces, and fitted it for jointing just in the middle. Our next care was the timbers or ribs of the boat, which we contrived thus; every one of the timbers was made of three pieces, and jointed in two places, because a whole rib, at its full length, would be liable to the same inconveniences with the keel. Now understand that the joints of the ribs were not made with mortise and tenon, but the flat side of one of the three pieces was laid over the other, and two holes were bored at every joint. All this while there is no visible provision made for boards to clothe the naked ribs of our boat, without which the keel and timbers looked but like an useless anatomy; but neither had we, nor was it possible we should have, any boards in our vessel. For the jointing of these boards, and the nailing of them, to make the boat water-tight, would require hammering, and therefore from the first conception of the design I always resolved upon a canvas. In pursuance of which thought, being all satisfied that it was practicable, we bought as much strong canvas as would cover our boat twice over, upon the convex of the carine; we provided also as much pitch, tar, and tallow as would serve to make it a kind of tarpaulin cercloth, to swaddle the naked body of our infant boat, with earthen pots to melt down our materials in, and prefixed a night wherein we might execute that part of our labour. The two carpenters and myself were appointed to this service, and the cellar was the place where we met. Matters had hitherto run on very evenly and smoothly, but here we met with some discouraging rubs. For when we had stopped all the chinks and crannies of the cellar, that the steam of the melted materials might not creep out and betray us (there being no chimney), we had not been long at our work before I felt exceedingly sick."

Overcome with the pungent steam of the pitch, and forced to go into the streets for air, Okeley swooned, fell, and cutting his face, there lay till his alarmed companions found him, and carried him in weak and unserviceable. Presently another man fell ill, and the work stood still. Okeley saw the imminence of the danger, for none of the men had such faith and hope as himself. Did their spirits once get cool they would soon freeze, so again he roused himself and urged them to the work. He therefore boldly threw open the cellar door, and as soon as the steam was gone and the men recovered their courage, pushed on the work at the canvas till nearly daybreak. The next night they met again, and throwing open the door, happily finished the work. Okeley stood sentinel at the entrance the whole time, to signal any approaching danger, and while it was still dark helped to carry the prepared canvas to his shop a furlong off. In the cellar they next adapted the framework to the keel, and the canvas to the framework, then fitted in the seat, and took the whole apart ready for removal to some safe place on the seashore.

William Adams, the bricklayer, who had often worked outside the walls, was chosen to carry the keel. Trowel in hand, and girded with dusty apron, Adams carried the keel in two pieces, and hid it in a hedge. One of the washermen carried the rib-timbers doubled together in a bag, among some dirty clothes, and stowed them away in another seaside field not far from the keel. The bulky tarpaulin was the most dangerous of all to carry; but at last it was put in a large sack, with a pillow over it, and taken by the washermen safely through the gates by day, openly, and under the very eyes of the soldiers and spies. Oars are the fins of a boat, and these Okeley and his fellows made of the slit staves of a barrel. They then laid in but a small supply of bread, know-

ing that if they did not soon make land they must be either drowned or recaptured. Two goat-skins sewn together served to hold fresh water. Okeley offered himself to carry through the gates canvas sufficient for a sail. He had not got a quarter of a mile from the town when, to his great agony, he saw the villanous spy who had before arrested him and Randall following him fast. The danger, however, gave him promptitude of mind; he at once walked boldly up to an English slave he saw washing clothes by the sea, and asked him to help him wash the canvas. They then pretended to wash the sail, and spread it to dry on the top of the very rock where the spy stood watching them. He soon went away, but Okeley, still fearful, waiting till the canvas was dry, carried it mournfully back to the city.

The day for attempting the escape was now fixed—June the 30th, 1644; the time, one hour "within night;" the place, a hill about a mile from the sea; and till then the conspirators dispersed, lurking here and there in hedges and ditches, till the blessed moment arrived.

There were two places thought suitable for putting together the boat, a hill and a valley. The hill, as we have before said, was first agreed upon, as having a good out-look; but when the night came they all suddenly preferred the valley, which was encompassed and sheltered by hedges. Near the top of the hill grew a fig-tree, and this tree two of the band were sent to saw down, as it was needful to strengthen the keel. Some Moors with barking dogs passed near the sawyers, but they keeping close, were not discovered. Moors were at work in a neighbouring garden, so that the Englishmen dared not speak, but they buckled to in good earnest at their serious work, pointing, pulling, nodding, and acting like builders of Babel, by signs and gestures.

"The two parts of our keel," says Okeley, "we soon joined, then opening the timbers, which had already one nail in every joint, we groped out for the other hole, and put its nail into it; then we opened them at their full length, and applied them to the top of the keel, fastening them with rope-yarn and small cords, and so we served all the joints to keep them firm and stable; then we bound small canes all along the ribs lengthways, both to keep the ribs from wearing, and also to bear out the canvas very stiff against the pressing water. Then we made notches upon the ends of the ribs or timbers, wherein the oars might ply, and, having tied down the seats, and strengthened our keel with the fig-tree, we lastly drew on our double canvas case, already fitted; and really the canvas seemed a winding-sheet for our boat, and our boat a coffin for us all.

"This done, four of our company took it upon their own shoulders, and carried it down towards the sea, which was about half a mile off. It was a little representation of a funeral, to see the four bearers marching in deep silence, with something very like a hearse and coffin upon their shoulders, and the rest of us decently attending the ceremony; but we wanted torches, and, besides, it is not usual for any to wait upon their own coffins. But we durst not grudge our boat that small and last office, to carry it half a mile, for we expected it should repay us that service and civility with interest, in carrying us many a league; we carried it at land, where it could not swim, that it might carry us at sea, where we could not walk. As we went along they that were in the gardens heard us passing by, and called to us, 'Who comes there?' but it was dark, and we had no mind to prate, and therefore, without any answer, we silently held on our way.

"When we came to the seaside we immediately stripped ourselves naked, and, putting our clothes into the boat, carried it and them as far into the sea as we could wade, and this we did lest our tender boat should be torn against the stones or rocks, and then all seven of us got into her. But here we soon found how our skill in calculating the lading of our vessel failed us; for we were no sooner embarked but she was ready to sink under us, the water coming in over the sides, so that once again we must entertain new counsels. At last one whose heart most failed him was willing to be shut out, and rather hazard the uncertain torments of the land than certainly be drowned at sea; then we made a second experiment, but still she was so deep laden that we all concluded there was no venturing out to sea; at length another went ashore, and then she held up her head very stoutly, and seemed hearty enough for our voyage.

"It was time now to commit and commend ourselves and vessel to the protection and conduct of God, who rules the winds and the waves, and whose kingdom is in the deep waters, imploring mercy for the pardon of our sins, and resigning up our souls to God, as if we had been presently to suffer death by the hand of the executioner; and, taking our solemn fare-

well of our two companions, whom we left behind, and wishing them as much happiness as could be hoped for in slavery, and they to us as long a life as could be expected by men going to their graves, we launched out upon the 30th day of June, in the year of our Lord, 1644, a night for ever to be remembered by his poor creatures, who are ourselves great monuments of Divine Providence."

Five men only after all started; Okeley, John Anthony, John Jephs, John ——, the carpenter, and William Adams, five men in a frail canvas boat, with an adverse wind raging against them, and Algiers upon the lee shrouded in the angry darkness.

"We were now," says the brave narrator, "without helm or pilot, without anchor, tackle, or compass, but God was these, all these, and more than all these. Our number was small, our work was great, we could not afford one idle hand, not one idle finger; four of the company continually wrought at the oars, and indeed we wrought for our lives, and then I shall not need to say how we wrought; but this I shall say, I can truly say it, I never saw strength so strained, nor the utmost of what nature could do for life and liberty exerted so much in all my life. The employment of the fifth man was more easy, but no less necessary, which was to free the boat of that water which by degrees leaked through our canvas.

"We laboured the harder that night, because we would gladly be out of the ken of our old masters by day; but when day appeared, we were yet within sight of their ships that lay in the haven and road, and off the land; but our boat being small, and lying close and snug upon the sea, either was not at all discovered, or else seemed something that was not worth the taking up; a little hope in the midst of great fears made us double and redouble our diligence; we tugged at the oars like those who are chained to the galleys, because we had no mind to be slaves to our old patrons.

"But upon all occasions we found our want of forecast, for now our bread, which was to be the staff of our decayed strength, had lain soaking in the salt water, like a drunken toast sopped in brine, and was quite spoiled; and our fresh water in the bottles stank of the tanned skins and owse, having lain in the salt water, which made it nauseous. But yet, that hope that hovered over us, and flattered us that we should one day mend our commons, sweetened all again. So long as bread was bread, we complained not; three days with good husbandry it lasted, but then pale famine (which is the worst shape death can be painted in) stared us in the face."

The adverse wind doubled the cruel, ceaseless labour, and yet defeated it. They moved, but did not advance. The waves strove hard to swallow up those poor wretches toiling for life and liberty. One or two, soon losing heart, began to declare that God, whom the wind obeyed, was fighting against them, and proposed to bear up with the wind, and return to slavery in Algiers. But hope and Okeley again roused them, and at last they determined, whatever happened, to struggle on while they had breath, strength, and life. Their perseverance was rewarded as perseverance generally is. The wind presently shifted round like a feeble enemy, and sided with them.

Still the danger was very imminent. Unlike tired sentinels who watch on, knowing that the welcome relief will soon come, these poor fellows had to labour without intermission. They might shift, but they could never rest. Another great evil was the raging heat of the sun, which burned like a furnace. The only alleviation they could obtain was that the fifth man, who kept baling the frail boat, threw sea-water over them, for their skin now began to rise all over in blisters. In danger, in pain, and almost in despair, Okeley and his men toiled all day quite naked, at night putting on their shirts or loose coats, their only clothing. For steering they had no guide but a pocket dial; by night they were guided by the stars, and when the stars were hidden, by the motion of the clouds.

In this sad and miserable plight they continued four long days and nights. On the fifth day despair took its dismal place among them, and hope flew from them. They laid down their oars, for their strength was all but gone, and gloomily baled the boat, loth to drown, loth to die, yet seeing no way to avoid a dreadful death from famine or the waves. They now resolved, in their dark and utter despair, to make to any vessel they could discover, even an Algerine. While in this dead ebb of hope, God, who saved "Israel at the sea, and the three young men in the fiery furnace," sent relief. As they lay in a lull they suddenly discovered floating near them a large sleeping tortoise. Not the sight of a Spanish plate fleet was more grateful to the eager eyes of Drake. The boat was silently rowed up, and they took the broad-shelled creature rejoicingly on board. Off went its head, the blood they caught in a pot, and

drank by turns. The liver they ate, the flesh they sucked.

The good warm food strengthened them at once both naturally and through the imagination; they fell to work like lions, and pulled hard, fast, and faster on. That did it. That very noon they discovered land low, faint, and blue in the far distance. Okeley lays down his pen, and finds it impossible to express the joy and triumph of that blessed moment. Fresh blood poured through their veins, fresh colour came to their cheeks; they looked like persons risen from the dead. Yet fear still held hope so chained and bound, that they could hardly believe that it was really land. It was new life only to them to see it, but five days of only sea and air, air and sea, and so many hopes deceived, made them distrust even land itself. Still the hope made them toil hard to see if they were deceived or no, and when they were fully convinced the land was no dream, their joy was extravagant. Regardless of the sharks that abounded in those seas, they all at once leaped like madmen into the water, to bathe and cool their streaming limbs. Then they all returned to the boat, and worn out with toil fell asleep.

Awaking in time to bale the boat, and refreshed by the sleep, they worked harder at the oars, but made but very little way. Towards evening another blue spot appeared on the horizon; that second island was Fromentiere, the first Minorca, as some of the sailors now recognised. All that night the men rowed hard, and on the evening of the next day, the 6th of July, reached the island at a place too rocky to climb. Just then a vessel, probably a Turkish corsair, passed, but they lay close, and gently creeping round the island landed in a safe place, and with great thankfulness to God, made fast their weather-beaten boat. After some danger from the shot of a Spaniard in a seaside watch-tower, Okeley and his companions reached a well, drank with great difficulty, and fell asleep. The next day, with feet raw and blistered with the sun and salt water, the five men crawled towards the city of Majorca, sleeping by the way beside a well. In the town they were kindly clothed and fed, and taken before the viceroy, who was anxious to know the strength of the Algerine fleet. From thence they went in a Spanish war galley to Alicante, from there, pursued by two Turkish pirates, in an English vessel to Gibraltar. From Cadiz, Okeley and his party got to St. Lucar. Thence an English vessel charitably took them to England, and they arrived in the old country, after a five weeks' voyage, in September, 1644. Okeley's canvas boat was long hung up as a monument in the church at Majorca. This brave and excellent Puritan afterwards became bailiff to one of the Osbourn family at Chickson, in Bedfordshire, between Ampthill and Shefford. His narrative, which he called Ebenezer, or a Small Monument of Great Mercy, was not published till 1675, thirty-one years after the events; a third edition was published in 1764.

GEOFFREY LUTTRELL'S NARRATIVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IN THAT STATH OF LIFE," &c.

IN ELEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER X.

As the morning wore on, I resolved to obtain an interview with Assunta; but how was this to be accomplished? Was it true that she was free? that this seclusion in her boudoir was voluntary? She did not appear at breakfast; I saw no sign of her about the house. If the maids in attendance upon her were spies, I must guard against arousing their suspicions. Mr. Ridgway was busy in his study with his translation of Horace's Odes, which he had talked of to me all breakfast-time, pointing out the difficulties of the task, and by what happy turns he had paraphrased the poet's verse in places. I was at my work in the crimson saloon, the windows of which overlooked the terraces and fountains at the back of the house. I listened to every footfall on the gravel, but only a gardener or two passed that way. Towards noon, I took up my hat, and strolled out. I passed her boudoir window; she was not there. I sauntered down to the water's edge, and watched the wild fowl stringing pearls along the surface of the lake; and then I turned, and made my way through a wire wicket into the great gardens at the other side of the house. I had traversed all the broad alleys, and was speculating on the small amount of pleasure this stately place could afford to its owner or his unhappy wife, when, on crossing a walk narrower than the rest, and screened by a thick yew-hedge from the house, I saw her whom I had despaired of finding, seated at the further end, as motionless as the Greek nymph with her urn on its pedestal above her. She raised her eyes as I approached, that was all. The hands lay listless on the long, stone-coloured cloak, which covered her to the very ground; the very outline

of the broad-leafed hat was unchanged against the background of dark yews; her eyes were just lifted to mine, no more.

"I am so glad to find you," I began. "I feared you were going to remain in your room, as you did all yesterday, and that I should not have a moment's conversation alone with you."

"I come here twice every day," she replied, quietly.

"I think this is not so pretty as some other parts of the garden," I observed, by way of saying something. My great object was to get her to talk, and this, I feared, would be difficult. She was silent for some minutes. Then, as it she felt she must say something, she said:

"I come here to watch a blackbirds' nest in that laurel-bush. I saw them begin and finish it, and now I watch the mother-bird sitting."

"Ah! I see her. Have you many birds about here?"

"I don't know—yes, I suppose so."

"And any pets of your own?"

"No. The less one loves, you know, the less there is to lose."

"Yet you take an interest in these birds?"

"It is the mother's loving care of her little ones I come here to watch. Oh! if I had but a little one of my own!" she exclaimed, with a sudden passion, "I could bear anything—anything. But the sins of the fathers are visited on the children. My own mother abandoned me. I clung to nothing, and nothing will ever cling to me. I shall go out of the world, a waif, as I came, leaving nothing behind me!"

"You are too young to talk thus. While there is life there is——"

"Not hope! No, there is no hope for me but when this life is ended. Would to God it might end to-night!" She had worked herself up into a state of excitement, and spoke rapidly. "Mr. Ridgway thinks I am mad, perhaps I am. I know I have said things I should not; if I talked I might be tempted to say them again. That is why I am dumb, as you see me. If I should ever talk to you about—about him, don't believe what I say. I have been the ruin of one already, in my short life; I will not be his ruin, too, God help me!" Then suddenly dropping her voice to a low tremulous tone, "Mr. Luttrell," she added, "have you seen Harry lately?"

I dreaded to touch upon that theme. "No; I see none of them now. My links with the Grange are all snapped. But in memory of that good time that is past," I went on rapidly, "will you treat me as a true friend, and tell me if there is any way in which I can serve you? The opportunities of my seeing you alone, while I am here, may be few, therefore I seize this moment to say what is on my mind. I am doing what nothing can scarcely ever justify, but the circumstances of your case are peculiar, and you have just alluded to them in terms which I cannot misunderstand. You are unhappy. Is there anything in your position which you would have altered—which the intervention of friends might improve in any way?"

She looked at me with her stony eyes. "There is no improvement possible—no change, for better or for worse, until the great change comes, when I shall lay my burden down, and be at rest."

There was a light step upon the gravel. I looked up; Mr. Ridgway was at the further end of the walk, swinging his cane as he approached us, with a placid aspect. But he glanced keenly at both faces as he said:

"March winds are treacherous, my dear. It is too cold for you to be sitting here."

"I am not like the wind," she returned, calmly, "and it does me no harm." Their eyes met.

I thought Assunta was about to speak again, but she checked herself, and, rising, walked silently towards the house.

"Well, Mr. Luttrell, and how fares your work?" Mr. Ridgway laid a light hand upon my arm; and I took the double hint—first, that the master expected his labourer to be earning his wage at this hour; secondly, that I was by no means to follow the lady, but to remain with him. I answered that I had done my morning's work; it was necessary that some preparation I had applied should be left to dry for several hours, before I again touched the canvas.

"Has Mrs. Ridgway been more communicative to you this morning? Has she thawed under the rays of old acquaintanceship?" he asked, with a careless air, which veiled but indifferently the sharpened curiosity with which he looked at me.

"On the contrary; she seems to shrink from conversation. I fear she is very far from well, Mr. Ridgway. Do you not think it would be advisable to have further medical advice?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "You cannot 'minister to a mind diseased.' There is nothing but time—time and a little philosophy. That enables one to bear most things in life if she would only think so.

What is the use of brooding over the past, and imaginary ills of every kind, instead of seizing the pleasures of the hour, eh? There is something in the Persæ of Æschylus to that effect, if I remember right."

On the morning of the fourth day I received the following letter:

London, March 7th.

DEAR LUTTRELL,—My brother says he was sent for eighteen months ago by Mr. Ridgway, and made the journey to Hapsbury expressly for the purpose of seeing that gentleman's wife. He remained there one night. She was suffering from hysteria and great mental irritability, tending to produce delusions of a painful character. His advice was that she should be watched, and that care should be taken to avoid any excitement for her. He did not consider, at that time, that restraint was necessary. This is all the information upon the case my brother says he is justified in giving. As to the subject of the unhappy lady's delusions, that is a point upon which he will always consider himself in honour bound to be silent.

I am, dear Luttrell, very truly yours,
F. L.

So far, then, this evidence was in Mr. Ridgway's favour, and it confirmed a painful impression which had been daily strengthening in me, that the balance of Assunta's mind was, in some measure, shaken. Every evening, and on the rare occasions when we met during the day, she observed her immovable demeanour, never again relaxing even to the extent she had done in the garden on the first morning after my arrival. It was not the aspect of mere dejection; there was something unnatural about it, as though the exercise of self-restraint taxed the powers of the sufferer almost beyond endurance. She never seemed to do anything; she sat for hours at her window, and would give me a little nod as I passed; sometimes I heard a few wild chords on the piano; but the sweet soul of the music I had known in bygone days was not there. I tried to arouse her interest about books; but she, whose intelligence had formerly been so keenly alive to such topics, now responded apathetically to every appeal of the kind. Her thoughts, it was clear, were fixed immovably on one subject; it remained but to ascertain whether, upon that subject, her ideas were lucid and coherent. How was this to be done in the face of a stony reserve, which it seemed hopeless to penetrate?

I had been at Hapsbury nine days; it wanted but one more to complete my work; and by no subterfuge could I prolong my stay. Late on the afternoon of the 12th of March occurred an incident which elicited a reply to the question which I have above recorded.

CHAPTER XI.

THE fierce March winds which had swept across the wolds during the past week had given way to a mild beneficent rain, softening the cracked earth, and healing its suffering vegetation. Husbandmen and fox-hunters alike rejoiced; the latter indeed regarded it as a boon sent especially from heaven for the promotion of their favourite sport. "You see, sir," as the old coachman said to me, "the groun's as 'ard as nails, and knocks them poor 'osses' legs about terrible." Not that Mr. Ridgway cared either as agriculturalist or sportsman. The bitter blast chapped his face as he sauntered up and down the terrace in a sable coat, polishing a line of his translation, and therefore he was glad of the change. Otherwise, the tender shoots, too early forced forward by a warm February, might be cut off for all he cared, and fox-hunters be exterminated from the face of the iron-bound earth. With his proclivities it was much that he was not that abhorred thing, a "vulpicide." It might have been looked for that he should have trapped every fox in his covers, and have rigidly shut his park gates against "the field" when in full cry. But diplomacy led him always to try and stand well with his fellow-men when neither obstinacy nor resentment ranged themselves on the opposite side, as they did in the case of his feud with the village. The master of the hounds had permission to draw the Hapsbury covers when he pleased; and once at least in the season the meet was at the house itself, when a sumptuous breakfast was prepared for such as were disposed to avail themselves of Mr. Ridgway's hospitality.

On the day in question the hounds had met some miles distant. But the direction of the wind, which had shifted round to the south-west, led my friend the coachman to predicate that, if found, Master Reynard would be likley to run in our direction. The rain cleared away as the day wore on, and late in the afternoon, my work being completed, I set off for a distant hill in the park, which commanded a vast expanse of country. A dweller in the great city from my youth

upwards, I had had few opportunities of seeing the chase, but it had always possessed great attractions for me from a pictorial point of view. There is no prettier sight I think than the hounds in full cry, and a large "field" after them. On this memorable afternoon I toiled over some ploughed fields and up a steep bit of down, in the hopes of getting a sight of the run, if it should haply come in this direction; and I was rewarded. When three parts up the hill, I caught the faint sound of the huntsman's horn from a distant cover, and then presently the yelping of the hounds, and the far-off "Tally-ho!" reached me, growing stronger as I breasted the rising ground. A moment more and they came in sight—in front, a reddish-brown speck, scudding away for dear life across the fields, followed, after an interval of shouting, hallooing, and yelping, by other specks, white and liver-coloured, and then a great stream of riders in scarlet, pouring from the wood at every issue. I watched them down by the furzy hollow, to some water-meadows, and over a brook which skirted the park on this side; then Reynard slipped through the fence, and was away across the open sward, making straight for the house, while the "field" took advantage of a gate a few yards further on, and swept into the park in straggling defile. I ran down the hill, hoping to come in for the death in the open, for now the thick coppice hid them all from my sight; but by the time I had traversed field and coppice all vestige of them had disappeared, and the deep quiet of twilight was beginning to gather over the park. I walked rapidly towards the house, which was still a mile distant; there was not a sound; nothing to indicate that a great company had just passed that way, and must still be near at hand. As I skirted the lake, and the Italian portico and flight of steps came in sight, I saw, to my surprise, a crowd of men on foot, and several hunters, held by grooms, around the entrance. What could this mean? Had the fox been killed on the very door-steps? I hurried on; and when I broke into the public footpath, a few yards from Assunta's window, there she stood, with dilated eyes, one hand twisted in the string of the window-blind, the other clutching the sill. She did not see me; she saw nothing but the knot of men in scarlet under the portico. A man passed me on horseback at full gallop.

"The doctor lives four miles off," I heard a man say as I came up.

"What has happened?" I asked.

"A gentleman has had a very bad fall. I'm afraid he's killed."

"No, no, not so bad as that; he's only stunned, and his head is hurt. If we could but get a doctor!"

"It was nothing of a jump," said another, "and Harry, who never stops at anything!—how the deuce did it happen?"

"He'd been up all night as usual, and was screwed when he came out; and he has had a pull at his brandy-flask whenever he could during the day. I saw he'd no seat as we were galloping along in the open."

"Who—who is the gentleman?" I asked, with a horrible anticipation of the truth.

"Mr. Walbrooke, of the Grange."

I ran up the steps and pushed by the crowd of servants in the hall, forcing my way into Mr. Ridgway's morning-room, on the left-hand side, where they told me poor Harry lay. I found him stretched upon the sofa, surrounded by three or four gentlemen; one ripping open the high black stock men wore in those days, another dashing water in his face, women-servants hurrying to and fro with sponges and basins, Mr. Ridgway standing just so much concerned as good breeding demanded, with his back to the fire. I looked upon my old friend's face, the face that I had known in boyhood so fresh, so very fair, so full of glee and impudence. It was hardly recognisable. Bloated, swollen, great purple stains under the eyes, deep furrows from the nostrils to the corners of the mouth, I asked myself whether it was possible that this could be the man I had last seen scarcely two years ago? He remained insensible. A little stream of blood flowed from the temple, which the women stanched.

"How soon can the doctor be here?" I asked.

"It all depends on whether he is at home when the message reaches his house," replied Mr. Ridgway. "Jane, there is a spot of blood on the carpet. You had better have Mr. Walbrooke carried to a bedroom. It is impossible that he can be removed from the house to-night. Mr. Mandeville, will you not have a glass of sherry before your long ride home?"

The gentleman thus appealed to, and violently roused to a consciousness that he was not expected to remain much longer in attendance upon his friend, boldly said that, with Mr. Ridgway's permission, he would stay till the doctor's arrival. The others, who, I take it, were but slightly acquainted with their host, meeting with no encouragement to do likewise, left the room one after another.

"You will find refreshment in the dining-room," said Mr. Ridgway, with infinite urbanity. "Thomas, show these gentlemen the way, and admit no one else but the doctor, when he comes."

We carried poor Harry between us to an upper chamber, and laid him on the bed. About half an hour after the doctor arrived. He pronounced that there was a slight concussion of the brain, from the effects of which the sufferer was even now slowly reviving. The collar-bone and two of the ribs were broken. What the internal injuries might be it was impossible, at present, to ascertain.

"Cut off his clothes as soon as you can, and get him into bed before he becomes conscious of pain," said the doctor. And Mr. Mandeville and I performed this operation, aided by one of the servants. It was lucky we did so. Scarcely was the poor fellow free from his saturated, mud-stained garments, when his whole body became convulsed by the most violent twitchings, followed by groans, rising gradually into shrieks. The eyes glared wide, utterly unconscious of all around; a cold sweat started out upon his forehead, and then suddenly a tremor seized him from head to foot. For some time he seemed incapable of articulation; his lips moved, and he uttered wild yells, like those of some tortured animal, but he said nothing, until at last, leaping up in the bed, he shouted:

"Take them away! For God's sake, man, take them! They're crawling all up me. There! there! my arm. They've got hold of my arm—ugh! They're getting inside me! They're choking me! Kill them, for God's sake! Can't you see them? black, slimy things—ugh! They're fastening on me; they're sucking my blood out. Help! Will no one take them off? There, man, there! They are plain enough. Damnation!"

And the shriek that followed must have resounded to the furthest corner of the house. It is enough to give a sample of his ravings. Over the painful scene that followed I draw a veil. It took four of us to hold him down, and his injuries, poor fellow, made it doubly difficult and cruel work. The doctor poured a little brandy down his throat from time to time, then as the violence of the attack subsided he sank back, cowering among the pillows, and sobbing like a child. I was thankful that he knew no one, that he had no recollection of what had befallen him, or knowledge of where he was. Mr. Mandeville had now departed; the doctor and I and a servant were left with Harry; Mr. Ridgway, much to my annoyance, kept looking in from time to time, studying the scene in a philosophic spirit from the doorway, and then sauntering out. I took advantage of the momentary lull in the frenzied man's condition to go into the passage and beg Mr. Ridgway to keep away from the room.

"Send up another man, if you will; the coachman is strong, and if another violent attack comes on we shall want him, but keep away yourself. You can do no good, and if he were suddenly to remember you, I can't say what the consequences might be. We must keep him in ignorance of where he is, when he recovers his consciousness, as long as possible, Mr. Ridgway."

"By all means," said my host, with a smile. "Were I vindictive I could wish the poor wretch no worse punishment for his brutal insolence to me—(do you remember that night, just five years ago?)—than to be reduced to such a state as this. It might cure Mrs. Ridgway of some of her sentimentality to see him now, with that blotched and bloated face."

"For Heaven's sake," said I, "see that Mrs. Ridgway remains in her own wing of the house, out of hearing of the poor fellow's ravings, if possible."

Mr. Ridgway looked at his watch.

"It is very near the dressing-bell. Shall we put off dinner for half an hour?"

"I can't leave him. You must excuse me. I could eat nothing if I came down."

Mr. Ridgway shrugged his shoulders with a little pitying smile for my weakness, and turned upon his heel.

The hour wore on. The sufferer's restlessness increased again. It was impossible to set the broken bones in his present condition. From the unshuttered window the last gleam of twilight died out, and night closed over the tops of the elm-trees in the park. Some one brought in a candle, and set it on a distant table. There was a strong light from the fire, which fell on the pillow, on poor Harry's wild eyes and fevered cheek, as he tossed from side to side, muttering and moaning. By this time they must be at dinner in the room immediately below. I thought of poor Assunta, sitting opposite her lord, and I wondered whether, by any evil chance, she had learnt who was the sufferer up-stairs. The doctor asked if it was possible to get some ice. I opened the door, which was directly opposite the bed, softly, to waylay a servant in the hall without ringing the bell. As I did so I thought I heard a rustle in the passage, but all was instantly still again, and I could

see nothing. I called to the butler over the stair:

"We want some ice. Are Mr. and Mrs. Ridgway at dinner?

"Only Mr. Ridgway, sir. Mrs. Ridgway is not quite well, and is keeping her room. I'll send to the ice-house at once, sir."

It was a relief to find that Assunta was not so near at hand. Her own room was far away from the main body of the house. I shut the door, as I believed, and returned to the sufferer's bedside. He cried aloud that the faces of devils were gibbering at him from the corners of the room, that they were waiting to spring upon him, and then, before we could stop him, with a sound which was something between a howl and a scream, he bounded from the bed, and made one rush towards the door. It was open, and there stood Assunta, with clasped hands, clinging to the lintel, her white lips parted, her eyes wild with horror, trembling from head to foot. The others had seized and dragged back Harry to the bed. I ran to the door, and tried to lead Mrs. Ridgway away, but she clung to the woodwork.

"This is no place for you, you must come away," I said, and I forcibly shut the door from the outside. "Let me implore you to go back to your room, and remain quiet. I will come, by-and-bye, and let you know how he is."

"Remain quiet, ay, remain quiet," she repeated, as if mechanically. Then, her voice rising into a wail, the like of which I have never heard, "Oh, my God! my God! forgive me," she moaned. "It is I who have brought him to this." And with a cry as that of some wounded bird, she turned and fled down the passage, feeling blindly at the wall for support. My heart yearned to go after her, but what could I do? I watched her white garments fluttering along the dim corridor, until it made a sudden bend, and I lost sight of her. Poor soul! Poor soul!

This second attack of delirium tremens was even more violent than the first, and of longer duration. For nearly an hour it taxed all our strength to keep the poor fellow under subjection, listening, in the mean time, to his cries of abject terror, alternating with the most frightful imprecations. I would that any man with a tendency to drink had passed that hour with us. That awful lesson would have cured him if anything could do so.

The reaction came at last, and he lay there, exhausted, with closed eyes, the ice on his head. The doctor believed he could now set the broken bones. A woman-servant entered with some bandages; I whispered to her, "Go to Mrs. Ridgway and say that the gentleman is much better." The clock struck nine.

I fancied I heard a commotion in the house, a hurrying of feet to and fro, the shutting of doors, the calling of many voices, and then, after a little interval, Mr. Ridgway opened the bedroom door, and beckoned me to come out. He was quite calm, but deadly white.

"Do you know where Mrs. Ridgway is?" he asked.

"Good God, no! What has happened?"

"She is not to be found. She is nowhere in the house."

For one instant I felt stunned, then a horrible presentiment curdled the blood in my veins, and I grasped his arm with a hand of iron. "The water, man, the water. Not a moment to be lost."

I ran down the staircase, and shouting to some of the men who were gaping there to bring lanterns, I seized a lamp in the hall, and dashed out into the black night, making my way straight for the lake.

One dreadful hour of suspense, the death agonies of hope, followed. That scene is before me now with terrible distinctness, the lights gleaming round the swampy edges of the water, the affrighted wild fowl fluttering in all directions, the shouts of men with torches throughout the park, the gathering crowd of villagers, and then—and then—at last something white is seen among the sedges, a man reaches it with a boat-hook, a great cry goes up from twenty voices at once—it is a body—they turn it over—and the moon shines down upon the upturned face of Assunta.

Life had been long extinct. When she left me and ran down the corridor, the poor soul, crazed with horror, must have opened a side door, and fled straight to the water. The men, returning from the ice-house, had seen something white flit past. She had cast herself in, face foremost, and had drifted to a place where the reeds and rushes caught the body, and held it wedged in among them.

I knelt beside her on the sward; I supported that dear head, and tried vainly to chafe back the departed life, and I have an indistinct vision of Mr. Ridgway, muffled in furs, standing before me.

In the long night of misery that followed I had but one comfort, one consoling thought—God had mercifully bereft her of reason to take her to Himself. It was as

much His will, as much His doing, as though she had been stricken by a lingering illness. Think of what her life, already unutterably wretched, would have been, after witnessing Harry's condition, the tortures of self-reproach that poor solitary soul would have suffered! I remembered the last word of her letter to him, "I shall die in your shame." It was true; the over-laden brain had given way, and so, in pity, the All-Wise suffered her to lay her burden down.

I have but little more to add. I must have spoken some bitter words to Mr. Ridgway, I suppose, in the course of that night, but what they were I have forgotten. The following morning I received a cheque for my professional services, with a few lines regretting that, in consequence of what had occurred, Mr. Ridgway was unable "to take leave of me personally." After this dismissal, it was impossible to remain longer at Hapsbury. It distressed me to leave Harry in his precarious state; but the doctor gave good hopes of his being able to be moved to the Grange in the course of a few days; he was conscious and perfectly calm now, and if there was no return of fever, he would do well. I impressed on the doctor the necessity of keeping his patient in ignorance of where he was, and of all that had happened, and I wrote by that post to Mrs. Walbrooke and to Lena, at Paris, urging their immediate return to the Grange to meet Harry, and offering to join them there, if they should require my services in nursing him.

But that summons never came. My injunctions to the doctor, though adhered to in the letter, were unfortunately, as I afterwards learned, violated in spirit. Mr. Ridgway behaved admirably, obtruding himself neither personally nor by any message upon the unfortunate rival thus forced to be his guest, while he gave directions that the sick man should want for nothing. But, by some strange oversight, or the cruel will of fate, Harry's departure from Hapsbury took place on the morning of Assunta's funeral, though an hour after the long pompous train had left the house. As he was being carried down the great stairs, the poor fellow looked around him, and recognised with a shudder of dismay the famous hall of Hapsbury, with its Roman emperors, and marble columns, unlike anything else in the county. Sad-faced servants in deep mourning stood there, and, while he was lifted into his carriage, some workmen were hoisting a hatchment over the great portico. He shut his eyes, and turned deadly white: a minute or two later, the travelling-carriage passed in the park some of the mourning-coaches on their return. The sick man looked out as the first coach went slowly by; a face was at the window, it was Mr. Ridgway's.

Harry never recovered that shock. He insisted upon learning every particular of the frightful catastrophe that had happened, and, in their ignorance of the effect which a knowledge of the truth must have upon him, to appease him, as they believed, they told him all. He divined, no doubt, but too clearly what causes had brought this tragedy to pass, and the blow, falling as it did upon a constitution already undermined, hastened the end, which, I believe, could not have been long delayed. Peace be with thee, poor erring Harry! With all thy faults, I loved thee dearly, and I often think that, tried as thou wert, most of us might have fallen like thee.

Mr. Ridgway survived his wife twenty years. We never met again. I read his name occasionally in the papers, as present at one of the dilettante societies' meetings, or as having purchased some famous work of art for an enormous sum. And that is all I ever heard of him. He is long since gone to his last account, whither I, too, shall soon be called. What am I, that I should pronounce sentence on him, standing as he now does in the presence of that Judge before whom the secrets of all hearts are laid bare? He was a mystery to me from the beginning: he remained so unto the end; but it was a mystery, alas! that brought ruin and desolation into the lives of those I loved best on earth.

END OF GEOFFREY LUTTRELL'S NARRATIVE.

Next week,
A NEW SERIAL STORY will be commenced in ALL THE YEAR ROUND,
To be continued from week to week until completed, entitled THE
WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.
BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

JUST PUBLISHED, THE
EXTRA DOUBLE NUMBER FOR CHRISTMAS, 1871,
ENTITLED
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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER I. HOW THEY WERE PLANTED.

SIMON FINISTON was owner of Tobereevil, including Monasterlea; and the Wicked Woods were part of the patrimony of his race. On one side of his mansion lay long stretches of unploughed fields, and untrodden bog and moor. Behind him rose gracious mountains, clothed with the rich hues of gorse and broom. The thick woods wrapped him round about, and would scarce let the sun shine down upon his roof. These woods also crowded in brilliant masses towards the horizon on the east. The Golden Mountain, which did not belong to Simon, towered against the southern sky; so that the lower hills beside it looked like the ridges of a wave upon the sea.

The lands of Tobereevil lie in a remote part of the west of Ireland. They had beauty at the worst of times, but now that the curse has passed away they are lovely and peaceful as a vision of Arcadia. But at the time of the beginning of this story they were sadder and drearier than it is needful to describe. The curse was upon them then. Old Simon, the miser, was lord of many mountains and moors, of many fallows that ought to have been fields, many fields that might have been gardens, many hovels that might have been comfortable homes, and some spirit-broken serfs who should have been grateful and light-hearted friends. Yet Simon of Tobereevil was rather pitied than blamed. For was he not working out the doom, and suffering the punishment of a race accursed?

A strange story is told of this curse of the Finistons of Tobereevil. One Paul Finiston had come into the district when, as the legend saith, the country was prosperous, the people well housed and clad. He was a man who came no one knew whence, and had amassed money no one knew how. Some said he had made a fortune by usury. He had, however, the desire to make himself a gentleman, and had bought the estate of a decayed old family, who, after the usual long struggle, had dropped into the abyss of acknowledged poverty.

Yet he had no idea of stepping into other folks' shoes, of being only the successor of mightier people. He would not live under their roof, nor walk in their paths, nor even look upon the same scenes which they had looked upon. He would pull down their house, plough up their gardens, and plant trees in the spaces which they had cleared. He would sweep away their fences and make landmarks of his own. He would build a new house to his own taste; and he made it stately and handsome, and furnished it in a style of splendour which would have made his predecessors stare. The magnificence of his pictures, the costliness of his carvings and gildings, his hangings, and his carpetings, made a nine-days' wonder in the country. His servants were a small army, his horses were said to be fine enough and numerous enough to furnish mounts for half a cavalry regiment. His wines were fit for the table of an emperor. His carriages were built luxuriously upon a design of his own. He seemed preparing to lead the life of a prince, when suddenly there fell a blight upon his work.

Had he been content, says the story, with the alterations above enumerated, he

had lived his life of enjoyment, and his race had not been cursed. But in his passion for changing the face of the country he had conceived the idea of planting great woods over the land. In pursuit of this idea he must sweep away the people with their farms. He did not want tenants, he wanted trees. And he wanted to see his trees grow tall before he died. So he rooted out the tenants, as he might have rooted out weeds from his garden.

In one winter week a hundred poor families stood houseless on the snow, and their cabins and cottages were levelled with the ground. Their master, Paul Finiston, knew the way to the great world, but to these ignorant peasants the mountain side was their world, and they knew of no other. They looked on in amazement while the work of destruction was in progress, and clung to each other with cries when the savage night came down. Storm and sleet beat about them, and they could find no shelter for their heads.

Their cruel persecutor took no notice of their plight. He had toiled for his gold, and now should he be balked of his pleasure for a few beggars? Let them go out into the world and work. For him he would have his trees. And some of these houseless creatures did set out to seek their way across the moors, to carry the tale of their distress to some city where it could hardly be believed. The aged, and the women, and the children must of course be left behind to shelter in the hollows of the mountains, and watch in vain for the arrival of relief.

The story goes on to say that, after many days of hungry wandering, a wretched band mustered on the hills and came towards the dwelling of their landlord, intending to appeal to him for food and protection. A terrible snow-storm overtook them on the outskirts of the wood, at a spot where there is a deep well sunk in the earth. There their strength quite gave way, and they lay down to die. It was not till the next day, when he came by accident to the place, and saw the corpses lying around him, that this wicked landlord felt some pangs of remorse for his sin. But it was too late then, too late to rescue those who had perished, too late to save his race from the curse which had been miraculously pronounced.

The legend is told in Irish verse, and at great length. A translation of even half of it would weary the reader. It was an infant who uttered the curse:

> There was a babe swathed up in snow-flakes,
> Three dreadful days since first it saw the light,
> It lay upon its mother's broken heart,
> And she was dead and cold since the morning's dawn.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Then up and sat that awful babe of death,
> And oped its frozen mouth and spoke aloud.
> And all the people stared to hear it speak,
> Even the dying raised their heads to hear.

This woful babe cursed the race of Finiston. Their riches should yield them no pleasure. They should perish with cold, and be gnawed by hunger. Their lands should lie waste, and their house decay. Their daughters should never live past childhood, and even those of their sons who had gentle hearts should become hardened by possession of the gold of the Finistons. The curse should lurk for them in the corner-stone of the wall, in the beam under the roof-tree, in the log upon the hearthstone, in the meat upon the dish:

> In every bud and blade of grass that grows,
> In every leaf upon their mighty trees,
> In every kindly face that smiles on them,
> In every pleasant word that neighbours speak.

In conclusion there was a prophecy. Never should the family be freed from the curse till one of them should be murdered by a kinsman of his own:

> Then closed his eyes this dreary babe of woe,
> And rolled away from off his mother's heart,
> Her arms were stiff and cold beneath the snow,
> And he lies buried in the evil well.

After such a dire event a mournful spirit was, of course, said to haunt the well, and from this the name of the property took its rise. The old name was forgotten, and the estate was known as Tobereevil, "The Banshee's Well."

The curse seemed to set to work at once upon the master of Tobereevil. He was seized with a panic, and not even his far-spreading, quickly-growing plantations could give him comfort. He could not forget that it had been predicted that his race should perish with cold, and be gnawed by hunger. He began immediately to retrench his expenses. Gradually he dismissed his numerous servants, sending away first one, and then another, upon some simple pretence. Now and then a carriage was sent back to the maker's to be repainted, or to get new springs, and never returned to Tobereevil. The horses also disappeared. One was too spirited, another too sulky. A fresh stud was to be procured; but time slipped away, and the stables remained empty. Gardeners and workmen, who had been brought from a distance, took their way from the place, and gardens began to lie waste, and the

place took a neglected look. The master, hungry-looking now, and ill-dressed, toiled at his farm, assisted by a small staff of labourers. His wife, who had come there as a sort of queen, faded away into a melancholy-looking spectre. His two sons grew up wild and half-educated. They were instructed in little besides the history of the curse, and the means to be taken to avert its fulfilment. These means were the saving of money, the stinting themselves and their dependents of the necessaries of life, so that treasure might be hoarded, making it impossible that they should ever come to want. The elder was to inherit everything, the younger was to go abroad and work for his living. This was to prevent all risk of the family prosperity being scattered. The elder, however, a gentle, sickly lad, did not long stand in the way of his brother. The weight of the responsibility broke his heart, and he sought refuge from the curse in another world.

The younger son succeeded to the property at his father's death, and became the first genuine miser of Tobereevil. And so it went on from generation to generation. The curse and gold were handed from father to son, and from uncle to nephew. It was a singular fact that no daughter of the family ever lived to reach womanhood. And meanwhile the accursed plantations had grown up, and the magnificent Woods of Tobereevil spread for miles over the country, and grew thicker and darker, and grander and more mysterious, as the years rolled along, and the curse tightened its hold around the lean throats of the Finistons. The wicked trees grew proudly out of the hearth-places of the blotted-out homes. No wholesome roots and simples were to be gathered among their shades, but strange and poisonous herbs grew hidden in their depths, nourished by the evil atmosphere of the place. If an old woman were seen rooting in the dark places of Tobereevil Woods her character was gone, and she was looked upon as unholy, and a person to be shunned. There were stories from old times of people who had been poisoned, and people who had been made mad by noisome weeds that had been plucked in the heart of the Wicked Woods.

Six generations had passed away, and another Simon Finiston was master of Tobereevil. In his youth he had been gentle and almost generous, and a hope had been entertained that the curse was worn out, and that the reign of misery was at an end in the country. The tenants on the estate trembled with delight at the prospect of having a merciful and sympathising landlord, of seeing the wild places brought to order at last, the decaying mansion restored, the plough marching merrily over the idle acres, and employment and plenty going hand in hand along the valleys and over the hills. But these hopes proved an idle dream. As soon as he became master of the property Simon's character underwent a gradual and miserable change. His gentleness degenerated into nervous weakness, his firmness into a dogged obstinacy. The friends who had hoped better things for him then dropped away one by one, and left him to his fate. The unhappy tenants fell back into despair, and the air was thick with their complaints.

And so at the time of the opening of this story the curse was still dragging out its evil existence. The heir to the estate of the Finistons was said to be a young lad named Paul Finiston, nephew of Simon, the actual owner. Simon had always kept him at a distance. He was a timid man, and it was said that he had a horror of the prophecy's being fulfilled in his own person. He dreaded being murdered by a kinsman of his own. However this may be, young Paul Finiston had never been seen at Tobereevil. His father and mother had paid a visit to the miser once. But they had hurried away speedily, and had never come back.

At this time, when Simon was growing old, the mansion of Tobereevil looked grim and dilapidated. It stood in a slight hollow of the land, with the sombre masses of the woods at its back, and a strong force of loftier trees mustering about it like a guard. The sullen grey walls were bleached, and blackened, and rain-soiled, and moss-eaten. There were broken panes everywhere, and shutters closed over them to keep out the wind. Weeds and wild plants grew on the pathways, and in the crevices of the steps at the entrance. A solitary cow grazed in the wild field that had once been a velvet-like lawn, and a few starveling hens pecked among the pebbles in the long rank grass. And in this dreary abode dwelt the man who was lord of Tobereevil, including Monasterlea.

CHAPTER II. SIMON'S SWEETHEART.

Monasterlea was a jagged green heap of majestic and picturesque ruins, standing in the centre of an ancient graveyard, and

there were attached to it some rich abbey lands, which made a comfortable farm. It had been built while Christianity was yet very young; it had swarmed with busy monks, and its bell had been heard for miles around calling over the land. It had sent forth blazoned manuscripts to the readers of its day, it had fed the poor, and it had tilled the earth. The sun had blazed upon its jewelled windows, where saints and angels gazed back again at the sun. Its music had floated towards the hills, and been the melody of paradise to many a wanderer astray upon the night. The legend of its ornaments, its mottoes among lilies and cherubs, had been perfect to the eye. Rainbows had streamed through its hollow arches, and the breath of incense had been warm upon its sculptured stones. Its friars had slept, and waked, and prayed, and toiled; then slept, and waked no more. And there were their graves under the carved stone crosses, whose lettering the hungry moss had nigh effaced. The jewelled saints had been carried to other shrines, walled up in trees, or trodden into dust upon the earth. The winds had rent away the hospitable roof; the fickle winds, which in so many a past winter had set a friendly bass to the chanting of the choir. The sanctuary was but a sheltered field where the sweet wild roses would blow out of their season. The tall grey tower was a building-place for rooks, and the clouds peeped pityingly through the high hollow arches. The sun filtered coldly through the ornaments of the vast Gothic window-frames. No glowing glass was there to turn its rays to flame.

The graves were everywhere — in the churchyard, where the people of the country still came to leave their dead; among the walls; in the archways; in the doorways. Yet this did not deter Martha Mourne, spinster, from thinking of making a home among the hollows of its walls. Miss Martha had had troubles of her own. In her youth she had been comely and lovable, and she had seen before her a certain prospect of wedded life, of matronhood, motherhood, and something of fine ladyhood besides. But now? Who could picture old Simon Finiston in the character of a wooer? No one certainly who saw him cowering over a single brand in the winter day in his mouldering mansion, or riding by like a spectre on a spectral horse. Who but Miss Martha herself could remember that he had been once handsome, and generous, and kind?

Miss Martha had travelled since the days she had known him so. She had been saving the pittance of her fortune, acting as governess to little French children. She was not going to settle down in idleness, and eat up every farthing of her income. How did she know whom she might not have to help before she died? How could any one tell how useful it might be that she should have a little money saved when she was old? Now every one could witness how useful it had been when the money had been saved, and an object for her charity had been found.

It was a nine-days' wonder in the country when she arrived from her foreign exile, and was seen hovering about the lands and the walls of Monasterlea. A patient-looking lady in a brown silk cloak appeared suddenly in the country. She was noticed poking about the ruins with a large umbrella. Peasants passing on the road, or travelling the moors at a distance, saw strange and varied apparitions at this time. One had seen a fairy waving her wand at the ruin, and striving to put an enchantment on the blessed walls; another had seen the ghost of one of the friars; while a third had beheld a vision of a strange brown bird fluttering among the bushes.

Old Simon Finiston must have rejoiced greatly when he received a lawyer's letter offering him a tenant, not alone for the lands, but for the ruin and graveyard of Monasterlea. A heap of waste walls and a wild, useless field full of rugged green mounds and broken crosses! Let the fool who coveted them have them to be sure, provided he paid a heavy rent. Perhaps the miser received a shock when, the bargain being made, he read a legible signature on parchment. His tenant was called Martha Mourne.

But when the workmen began, then indeed there was a wonder in the country. Miss Martha chose a corner to the south—a pleasant little nook, where the sun loved to shine. She roofed in a space, and covered it with a warm, golden thatch. She had five latticed windows and a whitewashed front. She had four odd bedrooms and a quaint sunny parlour. Miss Martha had no fear of the dead. There was a strange Gothic doorway in the parlour wall close beside the homely hearth. This led away into a long dim cloister. The cloisters were rather in the way to be sure, but they could not be got rid of, and were coaxed into service. A piece of one persisted in running right across the dwelling, would not be expelled, and so was obliged to do duty as a passage into the kitchen.

Thus right between the kitchen and the parlour sat a grim stone angel with a font in his lap. And old Nanny would aver that there were nights when this angel arose from off his perch and walked about the cloister, scattering holy water to keep evil from the place.

But the little home looked shining and warm with the ivy from the wall, which was its prop and background, trailing in wild wreaths over its amber thatch. A well-stocked flower-garden ran down the slope beside the graves to the river-side. The hedges of sweetbriar and acacia flung blossoms over the moss-covered tombstones, and here and there the mutilated crosses leaned a little to one side, and peered through the rifts between the roses.

It was not for the purpose of watching over her ancient lover, of testing the toughness of his miserly heart, or striving to win him from his unnatural ways, that the woman in the brown silk cloak had come poking with her umbrella about the walls of Monasterlea. There was one to be thought of who was an older and a nearer friend. In days long past Martha had spent her childhood by the side of a very dear mother and two brothers in a home, now swept away, which had stood but a mile from Monasterlea. The elder brother had been many years her senior, but they had been happy together, when she was but an infant and he a big boy. He had been good to her, and his memory clung warm round her heart. The gates of a monastery had closed on him early, and she had seen but glimpses of him during a long lonely life. But at last there had come to her a message in her exile, praying her to visit and assist him. The message came from the prior of his convent. The old man, Brother Felix, was weakly. He needed to have some care, some comfort, some change. The convent was too poor, the rules too rigid, to allow of such luxuries as these. Would the sister take compassion on the brother of her youth?

"Gladly would I minister to him myself," wrote the prior, who was the aged superior of an aged community, "but I have not a shilling of my own in the world, and there is nothing I could sell of more value than my girdle, which if I were to offer to a peasant he could but use as a spancel for his horse."

But, ah,! how the woman clasped her hands over the letter, and how the tears of joy coursed down her face! Blessed now be God, who had inspired her to lay by her poor savings! Adieu very fast to the little French children, who were all grown up and quite ready to forget the old governess. Ah, Felix, the rogue, he could not do without her! Strong as he was he wanted her to lean upon. Felix had protected her, a child, but now it was he who was to be the child, and she, Martha, the protectress.

So the friars in the convent had a visit from Miss Mourne. She came in on tiptoe, with a bloom of delight under her weary eyes. She saw a little withered old man, in a coarse brown gown, tied with a rough white cord. His face was wasted to the size of a child's, and his features were not those which Miss Martha had known. But the countenance was meek and benign, and a placid light seemed to shine from it.

"Ah, little Martha!" he said, in answer to her broken words. "She was a dear little girl. Have you met her lately, madam? I should like to see her again before I die."

The tears dripped down Miss Martha's face.

"I am Martha," she said with a smile. "I am now grown old. But it is little Martha's heart which is beating here still." And she pressed his withered hand to the brown silk cloak.

"You Martha?" he said, and gazed wistfully in her face. "Nay, do not cry. Forgive me, dear. I am older, a long way, than you. I am grown very old and feeble. But it is so much the better for both you and me. Eternal youth is drawing near."

Reluctant, but obedient, the old man turned his back upon his convent, the prior, more aged still, kneeling to ask his blessing on the threshold; and Miss Martha carried him away to the home she had prepared for his reception.

It had been worthy of her love, that thought of making him a nest in the old monastery. It was a spot that had been familiar to his childhood, and as a boy he had delighted to dream among the ruins. His dreams in the place had been to him what poems and fairy tales are to other wonder-loving children. He had lain in the long grass among the graves, and peopled the walls with his fancy. In spirit he had swung the censer, and rung the peal of bells from the belfry. Time had been when his mother, missing him long from home, had found him rapt in prayer among the tombs. A long life had passed over his head since then, of fasting and doing penance, of praying and contem-

plating, of much labour and little rest. And now he had come back here to die. Broken and spent and feeble, but infinitely happy and at peace, the old man had found a home for his last days in the very haunts of his boyhood's dreams.

But at the opening of this story the establishment of the home among the ruins was a thing of old date, and little May was growing up at Monasterlea.

CHAPTER III. FELIX.

Little May Mourne was born in Italy. She made her humble entry into life amidst the sunshine of a Roman summer. Her father had been a painter, younger brother of Martha and Felix, one of those who give up home, country, and friends to follow Art whither she may lead them. She had led him into care and difficulty, had given him hard tasks to do, and bitter bread to eat. He had had too much love, and too little power, and disappointment had broken his heart in the end. May's mother had been a beautiful Roman girl, who had not lived long after the death of her husband. Little May had disported herself in an Italian vineyard until she was five years old. Then the friends of her mother, who were poor people, had yielded to the yearning of Miss Martha, and allowed her to come to Rome and take the child away with her. Miss Martha had left her home in the ruins, her fireside among the tombs, had left old Nanny taking care of Father Felix, and had journeyed to Rome, and returned in triumph with the child. And so the girl, with her soft dark eyes and picturesque ways, had become a part of this curious household. It was like engrafting a crimson rose on a wild thorn, to bring little May to Monasterlea.

Miss Martha brought home various other treasures besides the one whose tiny hand was squeezed in hers. She brought a quaint silver lamp, and a picture painted by May's father, both for the little chapel which she had made for Father Felix. For she had roofed in a space off one of the cloisters, and set up an altar, and ornamented the walls. It might have been formerly a chapter-room, or a refectory, or a scriptorium. Now it was a chapel, which May could dress with flowers, and where Felix could pray the day long if he pleased. Ay, and the night long too. Miss Martha had not counted upon this when out of sympathy she humoured him so far. But he would leave his bed, which she had spread so soft, and would pass whole nights upon the stones.

No wonder that such things should be talked about in the country. Father Felix had been received with much welcome by the people. They loved him as a Franciscan friar; for these friars have always been friends of the Irish poor. They loved him, also, for his simple face and gentle sympathetic ways. Now, added to this was the fame of his sanctity, which went forth in whispers among the hills. It was said he could restore the sick by the great strength and faith of his prayers. The poor had no other doctor, and they ran to bring their sick to him. He prayed beside them; long wrestling prayers, which left him utterly exhausted. The sick went away declaring themselves healed, and the old man was carried fainting to his bed.

So he was looked upon as the saint of the country. His fastings, and vigils, and communions with Heaven were talked of at mountain firesides. If people caught a glimpse of his white head moving among the ruined walls, up and down between the rose hedges, they went forward on their journey with a lighter heart. The simple mountain world was the gladder and brighter on account of his coming. Father Felix had become a part of the poetry of the district.

Monasterlea was a very strange home for a child. The stories of the ghosts that walked abroad from twilight in the evening till sunrise in the morning, would have made any ordinary mortal feel uncomfortable. But the inhabitants of this house were not like other people. Miss Martha had no objection to ghosts. They did not harm her, and she was such a hospitable soul, that she was glad to give a shelter to anything, natural or supernatural, that chose to seek a harbour under her roof. She rather liked to think, as she lay in her bed, that her snug fireside, where the warm red ashes glowed all the night through, was a comfort and a refuge for wandering spirits, who, before she lit her hearth upon the spot, must have had a chill, damp time of it during their inevitable vigils.

Then there was old Nanny, to whom ghosts were a delight. She knew more of them than she would like to tell. It was not given to many to see and hear the things that she had seen and heard. She could give form and significance to every shadow on the wall, and could interpret every murmur of the wind. She knew what went on when other folks were asleep. She knew, but she dared not tell. If she did not keep their counsel they would drag her from her bed, and carry her through

the mountains. She should be dashed against every rock, and dipped in every stream that she passed over, whilst being whirled through the air the whole of the long night. So, though the ghosts might come trooping down the cloisters in the darkness, raising their voices, and making a tempest in the corners, though they might meet her face to face in the passages, dash the things about the kitchen, and bend over her and talk to her in her bed, yet of all this and more she dared not tell.

And there was light-hearted Bridget, who was the young housemaiden. This lass of the mountains was so laughter-loving that she could afford even to laugh at the ghosts of Monasterlea. Her polished red cheeks would dimple, and her black eyes glitter, to hear the very mention of their fearful freaks. It was her delight to come rushing into the kitchen of a dark evening, panting and laughing, and declaring that the great stone angel had risen up and kissed her, or that a terrible apparition had accosted her in the cloisters and invited her out for a walk. Yet in spite of all the strange influences of the place, the little flower from Italy grew hardily and freshly in the moorland soil.

It was a curious occurrence which first drew little May towards her visionary uncle.

The child had feared him. His looks struck her with awe. She shrank from him, and dreaded to pass the door of his room. Nevertheless, she fretted about him. She wakened in the night and wept to think of him prostrate on the cold flags upon the chapel floor. She mourned to see him touch no food. She hid little cakes in his pocket, hoping that he might find them and eat them.

One night at last she got up in her sleep and made her way through the long dark cloister of the chapel. There was no light within but the glimmer of the sanctuary lamp. The old man believed that he saw a white-robed angel approaching to comfort and bear him company. His cry of surprise awakened the child, who, looking wildly around her, shuddered a few moments, and then fled to him, clinging round his neck in her fear.

The old friar soothed her kindly. Absent-minded as he was, he could not but gather from her sobbing account that anxiety and sympathy for him had caused her to wander in her sleep. He carried her in his arms to her chamber door. Next morning she flew to meet him with smiles: and the blooming little maiden and the aged ascetic became the fastest of simple-hearted friends.

And thus out of its many odd elements Miss Martha's household contrived to make a cheerful and harmonious whole. As for her, she had her farm to attend to; and her house and her servants, besides her two children, Felix and May. She was a very happy woman, who felt herself a power for the protection of the weak. She had known what it was to lead a lonely life; but now she was in right good company.

NOISES.

"Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises." Yes; and not only the enchanted home of Prospero, but the whole habitable globe, and prosaic, work-a-day life itself, are noise-ful.

I am speaking only, now, of the noises of common life; of those of the street, the house, the workshop, and the field; and, knowing them to be as innumerable as the hairs on the head, or the sands in the glass, you will not complain if, within the narrow space at my disposal, I only tabulate and comment upon a very few. For there are "sounds and sweet airs that give delight, and hurt not;" and, sometimes, "a thousand twangling instruments will hum about our ears;" and sometimes there are utterances savage and discordant as those of Brute Caliban, when the Spirits pinched him for bringing wood in slowly; or, light and joyous as those of the Dainty Ariel; or, hoarse and drunken as those of Trinculo; or, solemn and sonorous as those of the Royal Magician; or, low and melodious as those of Ferdinand wooing Miranda. Every one of these vocal phases is susceptible of a thousand subdivisions. In the organ of love alone there are myriads more stops than ever Father Schmidt dreamt of; and Swift's "little language" to Stella is no more the same piccolo as Steele's twitterings to his "Prue" than the tremendous compass of diapason in Mirabeau's outpourings to Sophie is identical with the passionate wail of Heloise to Abelard.

Then, let me come to the common noises, and, in a brief span, endeavour to discern which are the sounds usually most agreeable, and most unpleasant to humanity. I say "usually;" for I think there is a tolerable unanimity among us as to sounds which please the ear, and sounds which jar upon it. There are deep-rooted prejudices, almost monomaniacal in their tendency, in certain peculiarly constituted organisa-

tions, against certain noises; just as there are violent abhorrences to certain colours, and odours, and even names. Of these I may treat hereafter; but I must premise that our experiences of sound being necessarily based on our own personal sensations, it may eventually appear to the reader that *I* am the prejudiced and monomaniacal person, and that what to me may be delicate nutriment is to other people ratsbane.

And first of sounds that are dreadful. Let me ask you a question. Do you like the roaring of wild beasts? Some three or four years since it was my ugly errand to go down into Kent to see a murderer hanged in the interior of Maidstone Jail. It was to be the first private execution under a freshly passed act of parliament; and although in my time I had seen, in the way of business, half a score of felons hanged in front of Newgate and elsewhere, this prospect of witnessing the strangling of a fellow-creature in a back-yard made me exceedingly nervous and wretched. Do not for an instant imagine that I am about to indulge in a digression descriptive of the horrible scene I beheld. What I have to say relates exclusively to the Philosophy of Noises. Two old and dear friends of mine, bent on the same errand, accompanied me to Maidstone; and we did our best to make ourselves, during the evening preceding the execution, as cheerful as we could under the circumstances, and to stave off that ugly spectre of a Man in a Cell, who, do what we would, was ever present to our mind's eye. We dined, and smoked, and tried to chat; but the conversation hung fire; and the cigars had an ugly habit of going out, rekindle them as we might, never so often. At last we went out for a stroll. It was fair-time at Maidstone; and towering amidst the booths and roundabouts, in a great area not far from the prison, had been drawn up the caravans of our old familiar friend Wombwell of the menagerie. We paid our fees, and went in. The lions were in fine form; the tigers were in admirable rages; and the hyænas were, as usual, choking in spasms of hysterical merriment. They were all wide awake; and the gas, and a large, noisy, and nut-throwing audience made them still more wakeful. They were fiercely hungry, too—feeding time, to increase the attraction, having been postponed until nine o'clock. And, when the wheelbarrows with the shin-bones of beef *did* come round, you may imagine, and I need not describe, the pandemoniacal row which ensued. Only, I may mark, that tremendous above the yelling, shrieking, bellowing, grunting, wailing, and gnashing of teeth of the savage brutes, could be heard the roaring of the lions. The noise, perhaps, was one which might have amused some people, even if they had been fain to stop their ears to avoid being stunned; but, while I listened, there suddenly flashed across my mind the remembrance of a certain passage in a book called Oliver Twist, in which Sikes remarks, "It was Bartlemy time when I was shopped." The ruffian goes on to describe how in his Newgate cell he could hear the fifing and drumming and squib-and-cracker-exploding in the fair in Smithfield; and how the noises nearly drove him to dash his brains out against his dungeon wall, in frenzy. Straightway, my thoughts turned from Newgate to Maidstone Jail. That Man in the Cell: could *he* hear the roaring of the lions; and what impression could those sounds have made on his distempered brain? For no human creature, I take it, who is going to be hanged, is quite sane. That story of the lions will not bear dwelling on any more in print; but do *you* weigh and ponder over it, and perchance you will come to understand the shrinking horror which I felt then, and, remembering the noises, feel now.

How are you affected by the noise of "machinery in motion," as the Exhibition phrase goes? As I put the query on paper I rise from my chair; grind my teeth; pace the room in agony; lean my fevered brow against a cool marble mantelpiece, and, on the cook knocking at the door, to ask what I would like for lunch, I am afraid that I say something very rude to her. There is some "machinery in motion" over against my study window, which is at the back of the house. A speculative builder, who is running up terraces, crescents, and gardens by the score in the suburb where I dwell, has erected a range of workshops at the bottom of my garden, where all his carpentry and joinery work is done; and he has further marred the prospect by raising a colossal chimney, which, in defiance of the Smoke Consumption Act, belches forth volumes of fiery fumes all day long. Can't I indict that builder as a nuisance—for obstructing my light and air? No; I am told that he is too far off. But ah! how I should like to indict him for his noises! He has gotten—I know he has—a driving-wheel with an endless strap on the tire. That wheel is driving me to distraction; that strap has entered into my soul. He has set up a circular saw—twenty circular

saws, I should say. They are sawing my heart in twain. I shudder at the shrill, screaming, ceaseless whirr. I can hear the innocent planks screaming as the merciless teeth eat into their very marrow. I can see—in imagination—the clouds of sawdust rising around. Oh! he can saw his planks into the most symmetrical curves, and the most shapely beadings, no doubt; but I should like to be behind that saw, with a hammer. And yet, how strange are likings and dislikings! With circular saw on the brain, I rush to the front of the house, desperate; but there, oddly enough, I experience no nervous discomfort when I hear the costermonger crying his "fine savoys," his turnips and his carrots. I shudder not, when the donkey-man who sells fish expatiates in prolonged bawl on the virtues of his fresh cod and "fine cheap soles." The sweep is rather a melodious person than otherwise, with an excellent baritone voice. The four o'clock muffin-woman, with her tinkling bell, fills me with comfort and joy. I could tolerate the milkman if he cried his wares in an honest and rational fashion; but the man who comes at three o'clock utters a cacophonous cry sounding like "Yahoop;" and the milkwoman, who is due at three-thirty—she is presumably of Welsh extraction, and has a pair of legs like the balustrades in the background of a carte de visite—puts her arms akimbo, and in accents as gruff as those of a corporal-major in the Life Guards, says "Cuckoo!" Now "yahoop" and "cuckoo!" have nothing, I surmise, in common with "Milk O!" I am waiting for "afternoon cresses!" a pretty innocent noise, when I am driven to the back of my residence again by the diabolical screech of the knife-grinder's wheel—as dire an infliction in its way as the circular saw. The wretch with the wheel—he will be Ixion I hope some day—who infests my neighbourhood, is an orator, forsooth; and instead of succinctly delivering himself of his message to the community launches into a long round running, "Ave you hany knives, scissors, razors, penknives, table himplements to grind, or heven humberellas to mend O!" and a murrain on him!

"Injins," the American humorist has remarked, "is pison." Let me note a few noises which, to my sense, are more deleterious than Red Indians, strychnine, or hydrate of choral. Newsboys are "pison." I must e'en buy the newspaper—on Sunday morning—but I hate the vendor. The key of the newsboy's voice seems to me to argue hardened, callous impudence. Moreover the young rogue interspersed his professional chant with catcalls suggestive of the three-penny gallery, and with refrains culled from the anthology of the music-halls. Iron hoops again—hoops are "in" just now—especially when the conductor rattles a whole gamut of noises on the metallic circle with a metallic rod, make a detestable noise. A hansom cab at full speed over freshly laid macadam is an abomination; and under any circumstances the noise made by a railway carrier's van is well-nigh unbearable.

There can be very little difference of opinion, I should say, as to the repulsiveness of the sounds made by the tearing of calico, the creaking of doors, the passing of a wet finger over silk, the endeavour to remove an obstinate glass stopper from a bottle, or the scraping of slate-pencil. Concerning sounds the bare thought of which is sufficient to set your teeth on edge, it is not necessary to say much more. The "tuning up" of stringed instruments in an orchestra is likewise obviously disagreeable to any person having an ear for music; yet Donizetti the famous composer, whose brother was "maître d'orchestre" to the Sultan Mahmoud, used to relate that the cacophonous scraping of "the bowels of the cat with the hair of the horse," was the musical performance in which the Commander of the Faithful was wont to take the greatest delight. As regards other musical noises, the point of their being agreeable or the reverse may be considered moot. I decline to offer any dogmatical opinion concerning organ grinding. There are times when the worst ground organ discourses, to me, most sweet sounds, and I could embrace the brown instrumentalist from Genoa as my long lost brother. There are other seasons when I could sally forth into the street in my slippers; shake the instrumentalist out of his brown velveteen jacket and his senses at one and the same time, and deliver him over to the tormentors, in default of his immediately moving on. The same may be said of German bands. Whether you like a German band in London or detest it, depends to a great extent on a first cause actuating two other causes. The primary is the weather, which influences your liver, the state of which reacts upon your temper. The result is occasionally a state of excitement on that side despair, and on this side homicide.

The sound of the postman's knock is to some a death knell; to others a thing of joy. But some definite rules may be

laid down with respect to our friend with the peremptory rat-tat. In the country the postman's knock is generally a boon; in town it is generally a bore. Nine young people put of ten like to hear the postman's knock; eleven out of a dozen of middle-aged people wish the General Post Office and its employés at Jericho; and—now that post-cards are established—at Hong Kong, to boot.

The noise of Baby is unmistakably one that cannot be dogmatised upon: save to this extent, that to all women the cries of *all* infants are delicious. Childless men would like to burke baby; Paterfamilias winces under the torture, but endures it smilingly. One bachelor, indeed, I once knew, and a remarkably crusty bachelor he was—I will call him Mr. Ferox—who professed to take huge delight in the uproar of the nursery. "I like to hear babies cry," he would say, with a hideous grin; "but then I like to hear a pig being killed, and a schoolboy being caned. *They're all suffering.* Why do babies cry? *Because they've got the stomach-ache.* They're suffering, ha! ha!"

The noise of a grand pianoforte. Humph! The point is moot again. Stay. A pianoforte in your own house, or over the way, may be tolerable. But next door, with a very thin partition-wall, and the performer yet in the rudimentary stages of the valse from Faust. Horror! With regard to the accordion, and its sister-fiend the concertina, I can only regard them as instruments of which the possession should not be permitted by the Law of the Land. Nay; I regard the accordion as remotely an immoral instrument. Note this, that whenever a shopboy robs the till, or a junior clerk embezzles the petty cash, it is invariably discovered that among the articles purchased by the criminal from his ill-gotten funds, have been a pistol and an accordion. To dismiss musical noises, I may hazard a suspicion, that most of us have a furtive fondness for the banjo. The truth is, that the banjo is a kind of lute, and the lute is a kind of fiddle: the most exquisite of musical instruments, and one whose notes awaken nothing but mirth, and jollity, and sympathy, and gratitude in the human breast. It was upon a fiddle that old Timotheus played when he made Alexander weep at the recital of the woes of Darius. It was with the sweet notes of a fiddle that Orpheus charmed the brutes, and won Eurydice back from Hades. It was not, as the legends idly relate, the retrospection of Orpheus that caused him to lose his wife again. 'Twas Eurydice's fault. The imprudent young woman had acquired a piano under the "three years' system," and looking back for it was seized upon by Pluto, and relegated to Tartarean shades for ever.

There are some very beautiful noises at sea. The voice of the waves is to my ear always eloquent, and, moreover, even when the sea is at its roughest, always friendly. It is very good on a sea voyage to linger late on deck, and listen to the noise of the waters churning among the paddle-wheels; it is very good to look down into the engine-room and listen to the labouring of the mighty cylinders, the dull thud of the piston-rods; the rasping of the fuel, shovelled to and fro; the clanging of the furnace doors. That is the kind of "machinery in motion" I like. Yet sea-life has its ugly noises. That awful yawning and creaking of every joist, and panel, and plank in your cabin during a gale! That dreadful noise of the sailors' holystoning the deck at early morning! That abominable grinding, tumbling, grumbling screw—a giant worm, which seems to be corkscrewing itself through your vitals—a worm that will not die until it has propelled the good ship to the destined haven.

The noises of the country are so numerous, that I should require many more pages than the Conductor of this journal would be willing to allot to me, for a bare mention of one tithe of the commonest rural sounds. But pray note this, and remember that although I may be a Goth, a Vandal, or a Hun, I claim at least the merit of candour. I am not an enthusiatic admirer of the nightingale, and deem him, indeed, a very overrated songster. I prefer the blackbird; and I would give a hundred nightingales, if I had them, for one lark. After this it will not astonish you to be told that I think the frog a very harmless little fellow, whose croaking is always cheerful, and is sometimes even harmonious, and that I utterly detest the much-vaunted lowing of kine. That lowing seems to me the most despairing moan possible of conception. It seems to say, "What have we done, these many thousands of years past, that we are never to be anything more than Beef?" A sheep has a brief chance of felicity as a pet lamb. But nobody pets a calf. We fatten him up against the time when the Prodigal Son shall come home.

As regards pigs "in extremis," I have already recorded the dictum of Ferox; but ere the fiat has gone forth for their conversion into pork, the noises of the curly-tailed

race are very comfortable to hear. In the cottage from whose back garden you hear the complacent grunting of Piggy, you may be sure that the ice-pudding of starvation is not the staple dish.

I hate cats, and will say nothing about either their purring, their mewing, or their swearing sounds; but, touching dogs—the majority of whose noises are much loved by mankind—I think that one of the most appalling, sickening and shameful sounds it is possible to hear, is the long drawn out howl of anguish of a dog that has been kicked by some brute of a human being.

There is much to be said about bells; but it depends very much on the character of the bell, whether we affect it or not. The school-bell gives out as disagreeable a sound to a boy as the passing-bell does to an old man. The sound of church-going bells in the country is exceedingly sweet to hear. In London, church-going bells are—I say it with all due deference—a grievous and a painfully increasing nuisance. Joy-bells and wedding-bells are very nice to hear, no doubt; when you have anything to be joyful for, or when somebody of whom you are very fond is going to be married. Indeed, I have heard of folks so charitable as to rejoice at the sound of their enemies' wedding-bells.

On the whole, considering noises broadly, I hold that the two merriest and most consoling sounds of common life are the squeak of PUNCH and the clink of a blacksmith working at his forge. The "Rooty, tooty, tooty, toi-o-i," means harmless, honest, unsophisticated gaiety:—the "sunshine of the breast," the lightness of heart of which not all the grim ascetics that ever preached shall ever deprive humanity, and the "Clink, clink, clink," the blast of the bellows, the roar of the fire, mean Work, cheerful, robust, productive Work, obedient to Heaven's command, and bringing Heaven's bread.

NOVEL NAMES.

THERE is no quotation for which we feel so decided a repulsion, as that well-backed quotation, that blunt, bent, jagged old saw, which works laboriously,—"What's in a name?" Your "Foolometer" when busy with the rude carpentry he calls conversation, delights to rasp and flourish with this instrument. How many a snug, bald-headed, shining-faced bore has served up this quotation, "all hot," as though it were a rare, even a new dish: "What's in a name?" to be surely followed by a complacent smile or laugh.

And nobody really agrees with the Divine William on this point. The gentleman who exchanged Bugg for "Norfolk Howard," did not go with the bard; and we have all rather a weakness for a fair-sounding title. But there are two classes who differ "the whole sky" from the bard (or swan), and would intrude into that delicious garden scene with a serious protest. The answer of the public and the publishers to the question and following explanation, "What's in a name? the rose by any other name would smell as sweet," would be bluntly that "the name was everything;" that all young ladies fling down contemptuously on the counter the work that Messrs. Smiths' assistant offers, if it be furnished with a disagreeable title. In this case, though the rose may smell as sweet, no one will take the trouble to smell it.

It is difficult to analyse this feeling. Though we may be pleasant on the novel-reading young ladies, the impression affects even the sage and whiskered pundit. The truth is, we confide, and always will confide, in human nature. We assume that the story and its title will faithfully reflect each other. They rarely do, however, for, as a rule, when the last chapter is "knocked off," the author devises half a dozen good titles, one of which is chosen after experiment and debate; chiefly in the test of its effect on the publisher, possibly a plain man, who says "I like that," or "I don't like that at all." The more flashy and sensational the better the effect. Sometimes, in the case of a serial story, the name has to be selected "at the other end," before the story has fairly started; but here again it has little relation to the subject matter, as the title is selected before the story has been written.

The philosophy of novel-writing might fairly engage the speculation of a mind like that of Mr. John Stuart Mill, and with this philosophy the theory of names is not indistinctly connected. The list of writers is now swelled to hundreds, and why the most feeble-minded of either sex thinks he or she can sit down and tell a story, and secure an audience to listen, seems incomprehensible. The evil, however, will soon cure itself, for where all are story-tellers, the difficulty will be to find those who will listen. In the competition for an audience, titles are at a premium, and the ingenious variety of nomenclature, as Doctor Johnson might phrase it, more than compensates for other deficiencies. An analysis of a vast

mass of provender for about three or four months, as supplied by the most eminent of the forage contractors to the novel-reading public, furnishes some principles in what seems a sort of chaos, where every writer appears to be plunging desperately to secure the most extravagant title he can. These nomenclators are therefore compelled to range themselves under distinct categories, though they are perhaps not aware of it. After all, the description of human emotions and actions is more or less founded on fixed principles, and accordingly we find that the story-teller has a choice of five courses. First, he takes the shortest and easiest, and gives his narrative some christian name. Secondly, he bethinks himself of some striking situation or position in life which that character fills, and makes a title out of that. Thirdly, he bethinks him of a proverb, or of some proverbial expression. Fourthly, he extracts a moral warning from his book; and, fifthly, becomes grotesque, and devises some fantastic sentence which is neither bitter, nor moral, nor proverb, but reminds one of the advertisement, "Watch this frame." Now, the first class, the simple christian name, is by far the most popular. The lady writers are specially partial to it. Female names are particularly in favour. Thus we have Hannah, Edith, Polly, Hetty, Patty, Fanny, Daisy Nichol, Dorothy Fox, Estelle Russell, Esther West, Anne Furness, Bessy Raine, Janie, and a host more. Men are also in favour. Arthur, John, Hugh, Claude, with Harry Disney and Gerald Hastings. The places, too, where these ladies and gentlemen reside and carry on a part of their operations is also found useful, and thus we are introdnced to Drayton Hall, Durnton Abbey, Earls Dene, Dene Hollow, Ashcliffe Hall, Ferneyhurt Court, and other ancestral residences. The House of Percival and the House of Elmore have more a traditional interest, while the Home in Town has rather a metropolitan flavour. Many explanatory titles are naturally found: the Canon's Daughters, the Agent of Broomwarren, the Carylls, the Heir Expectant, the Heiress in Her Minority, the Rector's Daughter, Doctor Jacob, and many more. This is a simple straightforward way of going to work; and a number of quiet, easy-going readers rather relish such titles, as being significant of something like what some neighbouring gossip would come in and retail. The adventures of Mary and Hannah promise something decorous, moral, and agreeable. Fairly to be included in this inviting class are those titles which ring their changes on somebody's wife, as Edward's Wife, Percy's Wife, James Gordon's Wife, which by anticipation gives a picture of calm, connubial bliss. These gentlemen are certain to turn out bookish, poetical men, worshipped by their ladies, but misunderstood, perhaps, and suffering in consequence. We can almost see James Gordon and Percy and Edward, one of whom at least must be a clergyman, preaching in a rich, full voice. There is the Doctor's Wife to keep the other ladies company.

Next comes something more particular, and significant of the whole tone of the story. As, Artiste, A Brave Lady, My Beautiful Lady, By Birth a Lady; and it is curious how a small crop of titles spring up nearly the same. Thus some one devised Her Lord and Master, and we find near it Her Title of Honour, and Her Own Fault. We have the pleasure of knowing Lady Flora, when we find Lady Judith waiting to receive us, and should not neglect Lady Wedderburn's Wish. Fair Passions and Fairly Won describe the tone of the story; so do Family Pride, Influence, Marquis and Merchant, and Maggie's Secret. Some one thinks of My Heroine, perhaps, from talking of her at the family breakfast table, when an imitator at once caps it with My Hero. The field, indeed, in this descriptive direction is very vast. But we next come to what may be termed "the morally proverbial" class. To this we owe Behind the Veil, Ropes of Sand, Checkmate, Bitter is the Rind, Caught in the Toils, Contraband, Far Above Rubies, Gone Like a Shadow, the Green-eyed Monster, Against Time, For Lack of Gold, and For Very Life, Schooled with Briars, Sentenced by Fate, Recommended to Mercy, Broken to Harness, A Life's Assize; all are of the same species; so is Cruel as the Grave.

Some titles betoken a quality, as Love and Valour, Love and Ambition, Love or Hatred, Lovers' Vows, Love Me Little Love Me Long, the Lover Upon Trial, &c. Some one wrote a work entitled Only a Commoner. Pendents can be found in Only a Woman's Hair, Only George, and Only an Ensign. We have Ralph the Heir and Ralph the Bailiff in awkward but not unfrequently natural proximity. Baronets and lords abound, Sir Harry Hotspur and Sir Richard, Lord Lynne's Wife, Lord Falconberg's Heir, make genteel company, who can hobnob with the Squire Arden and the Squire of Brudenell. Sister Martha

can pair off with Sister Mary. Truly Noble and True to Herself are of the same kind.

But we have reserved the most grotesque category for the last, which comprises interrogations and bold statements. Thus we have of the first kind: Is Lady Clara Dead? Will He Escape? Ought We to Visit Her? Of the second we have Red as a Rose is She, Cometh Up as a Flower, What She Could, What Her Face Said (this is the drollest of all), and What She Did with Her Life. Finally, we have what the novels rarely tell—How it Came to Pass.

A BLACK FROST.

No gleam of sunlight warms the leaden sky
With faintest tinge of gold. A murky pall
O'erspreads the horizon, and with biting blast
The east wind keen makes cottage casements creak,
And in the rick-yard whirls the wheaten straws,
Malignant in its sport.
The farmer's boy,
With blue, pinched face, and fingers red and chill,
Plods shivering through the fields toward his home,
Where ruddy fire, and bowl of porridge-milk,
And mother's smile, and happy childhood's shout,
Shall herald night, and close the ungenial day.

Hard, bare, and black, and adamant the earth;
Cold, black and chill, and lustreless the sky;
Nor man nor beast comes forth this eve to dare
The keen-toothed wind. The warren'd rabbits lie
Snug in their burrows, and the ivied wall
Is full of shivering, feathered fugitives;
The nooks and crannies of the old barn hide
Sparrows, and bats, and jackdaws. Cattle crouch
Close in their litter 'neath the cowhouse walls,
And panting sheep, together packed for warmth,
Bleat 'neath the red-tiled shed: the homestead cock,
Long since, amid his dames, hath sought the perch,
At earliest symptom of the waning light.
Rest, warmth and rest, the whole creation seeks,
And men and maids sit by the in-door hearth;
Cheerless and comfortless is all without,
Relentless, icy, grim, and pitiless,
The iron grip of Frost is on the earth.

THE BLUEBOTTLE FLY.

A French Art-Student's Story.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

Have you faith in the mysterious tie which binds the seemingly loose and incoherent links of man's destiny together? Do you believe that the thread with which our fate is woven is spun in one unbroken length, on which the events of our lives are threaded one by one? If so, you will not be surprised to find in me another proof of a great result arising from an almost imperceptible cause, for while some men are borne to fortune on the wings of love, and others soar to fame upon the eagle pinions of ambition, I was carried to the very summit of my hopes, and to the fulfilment of my most ambitious dreams, upon the wings of a—Bluebottle Fly!

No position could be more painful and trying than that in which my mother was left at my father's death. The small pension allotted by government to officers' widows would have been scarcely sufficient to maintain herself without the strictest economy, and I have often wondered at the daily miracles she must have been called upon to perform, in order to feed and clothe the great idle hungry boy with whose education and nourishment Providence had burdened her. To speak truth, I must have been a burden indeed, for I seemed destined to thwart her hopes in every way. She had set her heart upon my admission to the dignity of office under my uncle, the boursicotier, and the worthy man had consented to try me; but as all the labour and goodwill were on his side he was fain to dismiss me as totally unfit for the profession. So my poor mother was compelled to let me follow the bent of my inclination, and become a painter, the only condition she imposed upon me being that of attendance at the most reputable studio in Paris. This was not difficult, for everybody knew that old Rabâche, the great historical painter, deficient in every quality which makes the artist, lacked not one of those which make respectability, being a worthy citizen, an excellent national guard, and a punctual taxpayer. So to old Rabâche was I consigned. Perhaps by this arrangement I was made to suffer even more than if my mother had refused to countenance my pursuit of art altogether, for my soul was given up to nature, and I had been all my life subject to the same nervous excitement at sight of the green fields and waving forests as I have heard portrait painters declare seizes upon them whenever they behold a face more lovely than usual, or when they stand before Saint Somebody at the Louvre, or General Somebody else at the Exhibition. But I durst not utter any objection to the line of art my mother had chosen, for fear of strengthening the secret hope she still entertained of my being coaxed or disgusted into acceptance of the place in my uncle's office after all.

And so I went on daubing and stippling with small imagination and but little courage, until I completed a study of a girl at which my fellow-students had often laughed while I was at work upon it. The pale brow and flaxen hair had been painted through my tears at the thought of the

bright landscapes, the glorious Oriental sunrise, the golden sunsets I longed to study and paint, instead of the eternal studio models to which I was condemned. This feeling of discontent and disappointment must have influenced me as I went daubing on; for when the study was completed, and the pale girl with the yellow hair, amid which rested a single knot of dark red velvet, looked out from the canvas with deeply sorrowful expression, the students all set up a mournful howl, declaring that it was the picture of a ghost, and made the atmosphere of the studio turn chilly, and the very sunlight appear cold and blue. And they danced in a ring round the easel where it rested until my head reeled again with the noise, and my heart sickened with fear lest in their mad demonstrations they might destroy the work; for bad as I felt assured it must be, I yet looked upon it with a kind of paternal attachment. Although my confidence in the honour of my fellow-students was unbounded, I felt not the slightest security in their forbearance, and knew well enough that their love of fun was uncontrollable; so just by way of precaution, nothing more, I lingered that day last of all at the studio, and bore away, unperceived, the Study of a Girl, which in my own mind I had romantically denominated Une Poitrinaire, in anticipation of seeing it one day figure under that title in the catalogue of the Exhibition, and carried it home with the oddest mixture of shame and self-contentment ever met together in the same mind.

But the effect produced by the work upon my mother was far different from that expressed by the students. When displayed that evening after supper, placed against the back of a chair with our little lamp before it, and the table withdrawn in order to give it distance, it was received with the loudest expressions of enthusiasm. My mother could not look upon it without tears, and old Babette, our femme de ménage, whose eyes were already red with peeling onions, afforded the highest expression of emotion of which she was capable, by blowing her nose repeatedly with a shock more powerful than usual.

My mother's admiration, however, was not only poetical, but practical in this case; for no sooner had I departed for the studio on the morrow than she hastened to carry my picture to the colour-shop in the next street, and by dint of prayers and wheedling achieved a feat which I should never have dared even to hint at. She actually prevailed upon the cross-grained old shop-keeper to exhibit the picture in his window amongst the ghastly specimens of flowers, fruit, and "still life" generally with which it had been encumbered ever since I could remember. The old fellow furnished the studio with canvas and colours, and my mother had hoped to do a stroke of business by getting him to take my poitrinaire in payment of my bill. But the bare proposition had caused such an explosion of ire on his part that she had hurried out of the shop in fright, lest he should repent him of the privilege already accorded.

The walls of our dwelling (enclosing three rooms and a kitchen, high up in the clouds) were filled with dear mother's renown when I returned home in the evening, and Babette was literally trumpeting forth the praises of madame from behind the checked pocket-handerchief, and giving vent to a torrent of eloquence upon the subject while skimming the pot au feu, which was bubbling, steamy and savoury, upon the hearth. I own to a joyful surprise on my own part, although, of course, I was too dignified to allow any symptom of this feeling to be discerned. I kept my pride and self-satisfaction within bounds until after supper, when, having sufficiently resisted my mother's pressing request, I yielded at length, and ran round the corner to see how beautiful the picture looked in the shop window by lamplight. But as no foolish feminine impatience was to be exhibited, although I was suffering from the most intense curiosity to behold the grateful sight, I had courage enough to wait until the meal was over, and then, walking with steady footsteps across the landing, I rushed down the stairs in frantic haste, and by the time I got to the corner shop my heart beat with such tumult that I could not distinguish the objects spread out in the window. How great was my disappointment, however, when, on looking round, I failed to perceive my work. There, on one side, was the flower piece, a peony in a tumbler. It had hung there for years. There was the barbel, reposing on a marble slab, with a cut lemon lying near, and the hunch of bread beside it. But in the centre, where my mother declared that she had seen the picture placed before she left the shop, there was nothing more than the usual assortment of lithographic drawings of animals and the bundles of graduated pencils. All these must have been coeval with myself, but I never heard of their having been bargained for by any customer, nor even dusted by their owner. But in vain did I look to right and left. No

trace of my poitrinaire did I see, and the disappointment was so great that some time elapsed ere I could summon courage enough to enter the shop and inquire the cause.

The old fellow was serving a customer at the moment of my entrance. Without looking up from the parcel he was tying, he made me a sign to wait; and I stood, already humbled and abashed, before him, in full expectation that it was to talk to me about my bill that he wished me to stay, and I entirely forgot my picture in the search after some good and plausible excuse for the unavoidable delay in payment. But no sooner had the customer departed than the old curmudgeon's eye brightened up, and he extended his hand across the counter towards me, an honour he had never vouchsafed to me before during all the long years I had known him.

"Here," said he; "I have news. You are more lucky than wise. At last I am beginning to have hopes of you."

He fumbled in the till, while my heart beat with violence, and my fingers clutched nervously at the buckle of my leather-belt. But the old miser was far from feeling the same excitement. He went on mumbling in the coolest manner possible, while he continued his search in the till, picking out all the gold pieces, and sorting them with care.

"I sold your picture this afternoon," said he, abruptly, while I was so overcome at the announcement that I was fain to lean against the counter for support. "I saw you looking for it in the window. Ha, ha! I thought it would do you good to be kept a little moment in suspense. All you boys at Rabâche's want taking down a peg or two. And, mind you, your skeleton beauty has not been sold for any merit of its own, but simply because an old lady, returning from church, was so struck with the likeness of your portrait to a grand-daughter she lost some little time ago, that she actually purchased it, and paid for it on the spot. She was, indeed, in such a hurry to possess it, that she made the tall lackey who accompanied her carry it home under his arm. Thank Heaven, I know my trade, and when I saw the tears fall like rain upon the picture, I was moved to such a degree that I just run up the price to double the value of the miserable experiment. And here is your bill receipted. What do you think of that?—besides these two pieces over and above. And you may thank your stars, my lad, that the old woman's sight is failing her, for how else would she have bought the daub without bargaining?"

Need I describe the tumult of joy which hails the student's first success? Those two five-franc pieces represented but a small proportion of the sum required for our weekly expenditure; they would have gone for nothing in our rent, and yet to me they spoke of independence—a future of honest toil—a life of freedom. I knew the fellow was a rogue, but that was of little import just then. I clutched the money greedily, and rushed out of the shop without uttering a single word of thanks, for I felt that if I had essayed to speak, I should have burst into tears! I rushed homewards at a tearing pace. The first money I had ever earned! The first five-franc piece I had ever taken to my mother! Hope, pride, ambition were all astir within me.

If my emotion was so great at handling my two five-franc pieces, you can judge of that experienced by my mother. As she had wept with tenderness and pity on beholding the picture, so did she weep with joy at beholding the money it had produced. She was sure the old colourman had defrauded me of several hundreds — nay, thousands—of francs; even hinting at the probability of his having kept the picture as a speculation of his own, and ended by persuading herself that he would one day make his fortune out of the pale girl with the dark red ribbon in her hair. I valiantly handed to her at once the whole of this my first-born gain, but she, as valiant as myself, pressed one of the five-franc pieces to her lips before she dropped it into the pocket of her apron, and placed the other in my hand, saying almost solemnly as she did so:

"Do what you choose with this, my darling. They say that the first money of a young man's earning is the key to the golden gate of fortune, and, according to the manner in which it is turned in the lock, so is the young man's destiny decided." And looking fondly into my face she held up the large uncouth silver five-franc piece betwixt her finger and thumb, and adding, in a coaxing tone, "Now what is the dream you would love best to realise with this?"

Well, my first thought was of a little present to herself, a treat to the second gallery of the Théâtre Français, or a dinner at the Barrière de l'Étoile, or a drive to the Bois de Boulogne; but I looked abroad—the night was so fine—the air came so sweet and pure, laden with the balmy odours of summer through the window of our mansarde, and gave such

promise of a fair morrow, that selfish and inconsiderate as we men always are, I resisted no longer, and burst out as I stretched my arm towards the horizon:

"Well then, mother dear, if this be really the key to the gate of fortune, let me spend it in a day's holiday in the country; let me wander alone in the woods just above Meudon—you know, mother, *quite alone!*"

She has told me since that the choice I had made with this condition had given her so sharp a pang, that she wondered I did not perceive the start with which she received it. But selfish as usual, I was too much absorbed with the idea whence had originated the desire I had expressed, and which had been burning within me for a long time, and I added, more in answer to the thought that was passing through my own mind than with any reference to the remark she had made:

"And besides, mother dear, I feel sure that something *will* happen to me on this very day."

My mother said not a word in reply, but bade me go to bed at once if I wished to rise betimes, and hurried into the kitchen under pretence of preparing the little provision which should prevent my five-franc piece from melting away too rapidly, and also to hide the disappointment which the somewhat brutal expression of my wish to go alone had occasioned her.

And I did rise betimes on the morrow, and stole down the stairs as quietly as possible to avoid arousing my mother, although I knew by the deep sigh she uttered as I passed by her door that she was awake; but, filled with my own intense anticipation of enjoyment, with the beauty of the morning, and the prospect of a day's liberty in the woods, I contented myself with kissing my hand in the direction of her chamber as I passed the door, not without a coward fear lest she should seek to delay my departure by her overcare for my comfort. Never before had I hurried so swiftly down that dark old staircase since the day when as a turbulent gamin I had been wont to slide down the iron balustrade, and not until the porter had drawn the bolt, and the heavy gate had groaned upon its hinges as it swung open, did I begin to consider myself a free man.

It was scarcely four o'clock. One or two workmen moving along with stolid pace beneath their load of tools to their work upon the river, here and there a drunkard reeling home, and holding by the shutters as he passed, were all the passengers abroad at that early hour. Perhaps it was just as well for me, for I must have presented a strange appearance as I hurried along the silent streets with my huge portfolio flapping at my back, my colour-box hanging at my side, and a tin roller slung across my breast filled with my coloured chalks and pencils. So great was my enthusiasm, that I had made preparation for this single day's holiday as though I were about to spend the year in wandering through the virgin forests of Brazil. I had filled my portfolio with sheets upon sheets of coarse paper for outline, and a sketching-board, and scraps for foreground, and several brochures on perspective by the most approved authors, and the various methods of handling mountain, plain, or river scenery. The colour-box was equally well filled, and so was the tin roller, so that had I been lost in the woods I should have had wherewithal to appease the cravings of my imagination, if not those of my stomach, for many weeks to come.

But, as I bounded joyously along, the flapping and jingling and rattling of the implements of my calling discoursed sweet music to my ear, and formed a fitting accompaniment to the joy which overflowed my soul, and I laughed aloud in answer to the clamour, hurrying forward at a brisker pace for the mere sake of creating a noisier sound. The dark, old, muddy, narrow street was soon left behind, and away I strode until the barrier was gained, and I found myself at last out on the high road—stone-paved in the middle to be sure, but bordered on either side with open fields and trees and hedgerows and low fences, behind which the cottages, still closed and silent, seemed awaiting the first ray of the early sunlight to awaken them from slumber. The dingy shadows of the cold, dark, dirty chimneys as seen from our garret window had given place to the glowing blue morning sky, the rattling of the wooden candles, which hung over the grocer's door opposite, was replaced by the rustling of the branches overhead, and the fluttering of the coloured stuffs hung out upon the dyer's pole next door, to the waving of the long feathery clematis, tossed by the breeze from the summit of the high walls and over the hedges by the wayside.

I had reached Clamart before the sun was high, so quickly had I walked. Here I turned up the street leading to a gate of the wood and sat myself down before the stone bench outside the door of the little wine shop well known amongst artists as the Modèle

des Modèles, being kept by an ancient model familiar to every studio in Paris, whose cognomen of Père Ajax had been acquired by the success with which he had stood for that personage in the famous group of Cassandra. The hour was still too early for business, and as I was spreading out my store of cold bouilli, radishes, and gruyère beside me upon the bench, Père Ajax himself came clattering down the steps with his wooden sabots and cotton nightcap to open the shutters, to display to the light of day the provision of dusty bottles and broken coffee-cups which adorned the window, and to sweep the path in front of the door, still strewn with the faded acacia flowers and green chestnut husks, brought in by the students returning from the wood the evening before. Although but that moment risen from his bed, the Père Ajax was quite as much disposed for rest as though he had been undergoing a hard day's toil, and so he sat himself down at the other end of the stone bench, and began to question me as usual concerning the artistic news of the studio, not forgetting to fetch a litre of petit bleu, of which I drank heartily—strong as it was, and unused as I had ever been to drinking—so exhausted had I become with the length of my walk, and the pace at which I had proceeded. It was a pleasure to Père Ajax to watch the morsels, little and big, square, oblong, or three-cornered, as they disappeared down my throat with the quickness of lightning. It was a pleasure to me also to behold Père Ajax leaning on his birch-broom, as he listened with the most intense interest to my story of the first sale I had ever accomplished; but when I told him the use to which I had destined my first earnings he became enthusiastic.

"Ah, mon garçon," exclaimed he, "if I were free as in the good old times, I would go with you, and what a jolly quiet day we should have together up in the woods! Never saddle yourself with encumbrances. If I could only leave the house to the care of my dear Euphrosyne! But no, it would never do—on the very day, too, when Tony Lanterneau starts his new coucou. No, no. I must stay. You know young Tony, the handsome groom at the Cloche d'Or. No? Well he starts a new venture to-day, a brand-new coucou, to ply between Clamart and Meudon for the accommodation of the painters who prefer the road through the wood to the dusty highway; the cool shady paths to the heat and hurry of the railroad. A clever fellow that Tony, he will be sure to succeed. The women all dote on him so. He is to stop at this door for passengers and parcels. No, no, it would be imprudent to leave the house to the sole care of my dear Euphrosyne."

Just as Père Ajax had finished his bewailing, a hoarse impatient cry was heard upon the road, accompanied by an irritating jingle of brass bells, and presently loomed upon the sight Tony Lanterneau's new coucou. And, sure enough, brilliant it was in the extreme; the wheels of brightest yellow, the body of intensest blue, and on each side a winged Cupid flying from a cloud, with a rose far bigger than his head waving in his extended hand. The curtains fluttered in the breeze; they were of red and white striped calico, and added greatly to the showy appearance of the vehicle. But there was something listless and disconsolate in the trot of the old white horse as he floundered down the hill, kicking the stones to right and left, and something ominous in the silence of the driver, as he sat alone upon the swinging board in front. And when the coucou drew up to the door of the Modèle des Modèles, Tony jumped from his seat with forlorn and sheepish looks, which but ill-accorded with his own gay appearance and the highly-ornamented style of the coucou. It was evident the poor fellow was not in the best of humours, for when Père Ajax pressed forward triumphantly to welcome the customers he supposed to be concealed behind the striped calico curtains which floated so gaily round the coucou, he was driven back rather angrily by Tony, who uttered an impatient malediction on his ill-luck, for he had arrived from Paris without a single passenger! All the golden promises of the students had vanished into the air, and he had been most cruelly deceived by them all. As usual, however, vanity spoke even louder than self-interest; for, although the pecuniary loss was painful enough, it was as nothing compared to the mortification of being compelled to drive into Meudon in this forlorn state.

"If I had only a 'lapin,'" exclaimed he in despair, "only just one, to share the swing-board, nobody need have known that we are empty within. I shall have to pick up some beggar on the road, or else I shall become the laughing-stock of the girls, who will be out to see me drive up the high street. If you were not so well known, Père Ajax, I would ask you to be my lapin, but they would all know you to be a passenger of straw."

Here a sudden light broke in upon Père Ajax, and he exclaimed, as he slapped me on the shoulder:

"Well, my boy, never despair, here is your lapin already unburrowed. Here is a young fellow going on to Meudon. I warrant me he won't be sorry to get a cheap ride instead of having to walk up that confounded hill, all harnessed and caparisoned as he is." And he laughed as he gave my tin roller a tap with the handle of the broom upon which he was still leaning, and made me reel backwards with the shock. Tony looked at me wistfully; my personal appearance was everything that could be desired for the purpose. I was young, new to that part of the world, and an artist. On my own part I was nothing loth to profit by the opportunity. I had walked too fast for the same degree of exertion to be possible after the hearty meal I had been making. Reflection came in aid of digestion, and I accepted joyfully the seat on the swing-board by the side of Tony Lanterneau, who, when he had tossed off his petit verre, jumped up joyously beside me, and drove away down the hill at a far more joyous pace for having the additional load. The bells jingled again, but with a more brisk and lively peal, the wheels creaked and clattered with a more sharp, determined sound, the badger's tail on the old horse's forehead wagged to and fro with a more frolicsome motion, and we got under way with every prospect of a pleasant drive. The sun was now getting high, the dust lay ankle deep upon the pathway, the woods were still silent—the road we were pursuing belongs almost exclusively to the holiday-making grisettes and students of the Pays Latin, whose frolics cannot commence until after lectures and working hours—and none were abroad as yet to enjoy the beauty of the morning. The birds alone had begun their merry chatter, and although the dew lay still in glittering drops upon the tall grass which bordered the woods, the shade was already acceptable. The hill was steep. Tony had observed that there was no need for haste; he owned to having vexed and worried the poor old horse in his rage, and was now disposed to let him have his ease, and suffered the reins to hang loosely on his neck while he told me all his grievances. We were just reaching the top of the hill, Tony was finishing his doleful tale, my digestion was being painfully completed, the petit bleu was thumping and bumping most riotously on the top of my head, making it feel of unusual weight and size. All these elements mingled together were fast beginning to produce their usual result in slumber, to which I was about to yield, when I was suddenly aroused by a loud shout, followed by an injunction to stop, and presently a man emerged from beneath the overhanging branches of the wood, rushed to the horse's head, and seized the bit with a sudden violence that sent the creature back upon his haunches, and in a confused jargon, one mass of spluttering, stammering, and stuttering, occasioned by over anxiety and want of breath, he managed to make us understand that our help was needed. An accident had occurred at a short distance from the road. Tony, who was good natured by temperament, and curious by nature, readily undertook to lend the assistance required, and obeyed the summons with all the more alacrity that he scented a job as the result of the disaster.

And he was not mistaken. The gentleman was sent by Providence, the accident was of Heaven's own design. This Tony never for a moment doubted, when, after having rapidly told the story of the adventure which had befallen the party of gentlemen he had accompanied from Paris, the breaking-down of the hackney-coach which had brought them, the departure of one of the party in search of another vehicle to convey them to their destination, the stranger ended by bidding him name his own terms to drive them with all speed to the Three Acacias, in the middle of the wood, where people were waiting for them with the greatest impatience. The stranger was peremptory; he would take no refusal; the haste was great, the necessity most pressing. Tony's head was turned; his one single passenger—myself—must be sacrificed, and the turn of luck was so unexpected to the poor disappointed speculator of the coucou, that he hesitated not for an instant to make the sacrifice, and did it, too, without a murmur of regret, simply observing:

"You see, monsieur, in what an unfortunate position I am placed."

But what cared I whither the Fates were about to lead me? The Three Acacias or anywhere else, so long as my steps were bent to the greenwood. Besides, I had grown downright weary since I had been resting in the coucou. The petit bleu was bubbling on my brain, and my head ached tremendously. And so I vastly preferred being driven onwards by Tony Lanterneau to the fatigue of walking up the hill, a task for which I felt that I was

no longer fitted. We turned, therefore, into the wood, the stranger leading the horse, and bumping the coucou over the grass clumps and sand hillocks without mercy. I had leisure to examine him as he walked before us. He was a tall, stiff-looking individual, with an exaggeration of military swagger; his hat was set jauntily on one side, and his hair cropped close, while his moustache was tremendously exuberant, which gave a coarse brutality to the expression of his countenance, according well with the rest of his person. He was attired in a tight-fitting coat with low collar, and his nether garments, of white corded stuff, were strapped and tightened over thick heavy boots. Nothing about him betokened the gentleman, and yet his pretension to military rank was evident. Before I could make up my mind as to his social position, we had come upon the scene of the disaster. A hackney-coach was lying on its side, overturned in a ditch; the coachman was standing by the horses, which had been unharnessed, and a young man was seated amongst the tall grass and flowers on a rising bank, gazing on the scene with evident impatience, but without the smallest endeavour to render assistance.

At the sight of the coucou he arose languidly, and, while his companion settled the account, to the evident satisfaction of the hackney-coachman, he scrambled into the vehicle, ensconced himself in the corner best shaded by the striped curtains, and laid his head backwards, as if wearied out with the fatigue and exertion he had undergone. The military-looking man, carrying a long green-baize bag under his arm, stood for a moment upon the iron step, plunging his head into the interior. Then exclaiming that the smell of the new paint, the varnish, and the leather rendered it insupportable, he demanded of me, somewhat peremptorily I thought, if I would give up my place for an inside corner. To this I assented at once, for the sun was beginning to dart with a terrible glare upon the polished leather of the harness, and my eyes were blinded by the flashing of the new brass ornaments. So I cheerfully leaped down from my seat upon the swing-board. The stranger thanked me grimly, climbed to my place, laid the long bag of green-baize across his knees with the greatest care, pulled up the corners of his moustache, and set his hat over his brow to shade his eyes from the sun; while I jumped lightly into the vehicle, little dreaming that this simple action had determined my future destiny, and that for me Accident had ceased and Fatality had begun!

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER III. THE CIPHER TELEGRAM.

Sir Geoffry was walking in the grounds at Wheatcroft when a fly with Madge and her luggage drove up to the little lodge gates. The old general looked up, and recognising the visitor, walked to the door of the vehicle and courteously assisted her to alight.

"If you are not tired, Mrs. Pickering," said he, "you may as well let the man go on with your luggage to the house, while we stroll up there quietly together; it is a beautiful evening, and there are one or two things which I have to say to you."

He spoke to her with doffed hat, and holding her hand in his, treating her as he always treated her, as a lady and his equal in rank.

Looking at him with the evening sunlight falling full upon his face, Madge was much struck with the alteration in Sir Geoffry's appearance. His cheeks, never very full, were now quite hollow; his lips seemed more tightly set and more rigid even than usual, and there was a strange, strained, seared look round his eyes.

"I shall be delighted to walk with you," said Madge, "for I am cramped with long railway travelling. Has anything happened, Sir Geoffry, during my absence?" she asked, suddenly.

"What could have happened?" he replied, turning to her abruptly. "What makes you inquire?"

"Something in your appearance," she said; "a look of care and anxiety, mingled with a certain amount of rebellious opposition, which I have never before perceived in you. You are not annoyed at my frankness, I hope?"

"On the contrary, I am gratified at the interest you are good enough to take in me; and more than ever impressed with the quickness of your perception."

"Then something has happened?"

"Exactly, something sufficiently disagreeable. I will tell you about it when you have had some refreshment; you must be faint after your long journey."

"I would very much sooner hear it now. I had some luncheon at Salisbury; besides,

being kept in suspense as to the cause of your annoyance, would quite deprive me of any appetite."

"Well, then, I will tell you, and do my best to make my story as short as possible. You have never asked me any particulars of my early history, Mrs. Pickering, nor have I volunteered them to you; but you know that I have a son—I say you know it, because on two or three occasions when I have expressed myself as to the ingratitude of children, I have seen your eyes fixed upon me with that quiet, searching gaze which is peculiar to yourself, and which showed me you guessed I was not speaking on a subject of which I had not had experience. I have a son——"

"Gerald! I—I mean George."

"I beg your pardon," exclaimed the old gentleman, with surprise, "your information is more complete than I imagined. You seem to know my son's name?"

"From seeing it subscribed to a few boyish letters, and one or two water-colour sketches, which were amongst the papers you bade me empty from the bullock-trunk and destroy," said Madge.

"Quite right, I recollect them," said the general. "Yes, I have one son, George Heriot. His mother died when he was a lad. Ten years before her death I separated from her, believing her to have been guilty of an intrigue with a man whom I shot; the boy lived with her during her lifetime, but on my return to England I intended to make him my companion and my heir, when by the commission of what I consider one of the worst of all crimes, an act of cowardice, he forfeited all claim upon my affection. I forbade him my house, telling him at the same time—not maliciously, but as an incidental portion of our quarrel with which I need not trouble you—the story of his mother's disgrace. The lad declared I had been befooled by my own jealousy and temper, and swore that he would never rest until he had convinced me of my error, and cleared his mother's name."

"That was good and brave!" said Madge. "A lad who could undertake such a championship and in such a spirit could be no coward."

"You think so," said Sir Geoffry, looking sharply at her.

"I am sure of it!" said Madge. "Ask yourself, Sir Geoffry; what does your own heart tell you?"

"My heart tells me what it told me at the time I discovered my wife's intrigue; that thoroughly well informed as I was of her guilt, I acted rightly in separating myself from her and killing her seducer. When George Heriot raved before me my heart told me that his conduct was mere boyish bravado and unfilial insolence. When he came here yesterday——"

"Did he come here yesterday? Was Gerald—George here yesterday?"

"He was; and when he stood there boasting that he had succeeded in what he had undertaken, and that he had proofs of his mother's innocence, my heart told me that it was a lie; and that he had returned with some trumped-up tale to endeavour to reinstate himself in my favour."

The general was very hot and very much flushed when he came to a conclusion. He looked towards his companion, as though expecting her to speak; but finding she did not do so, he said, after a pause:

"You are silent, Mrs. Pickering!"

"Do you wish me to speak, Sir Geoffry?"

He paused again, and, apparently after some slight internal struggle, he said:

"I do, though if I guess rightly, what you have to say will not be quite consonant with my feelings, not quite agreeable for me to hear. Nevertheless, say what you have to say, and I will listen to you: there is no other person in the world from whom I could take as much."

This last sentence was only half heard by Madge. She was revolving in her mind whether she should confess to Sir Geoffry her acquaintance with Gerald, and the important part which she had played in the drama of the boy's life. Her first idea was to confess all; but when she recollected the old general's infirmity of temper, she thought that such an admission would lead him to look upon her in the light of a partisan, and thus irretrievably weaken her advocacy.

"I had no right to speak until requested by you to do so," she said; "and as you have rightly divined that I do not hold with your views in the matter, I would willingly have held my peace. Bidden to speak, I tell you frankly, Sir Geoffry, that I think you have been wrong from first to last. Of course the whole affair, the separation from your wife, the disinheriting of your son, all hangs upon the one question of whether Mrs. Heriot were innocent or guilty. You say that you convinced yourself before the fulfilment of your revenge, but your son declares that he has obtained proofs of his mother's innocence. You are hasty, Sir Geoffry, apt to jump at conclusions without due deliberation, impatient of contradiction, and from what I know of your son, or rather I mean of course from

what I have heard, and from what I gather from your account of him, he would not, I imagine, be likely to come forward without ample grounds for his assertion."

The general had been pacing slowly by Madge's side during this colloquy, his hands clasped behind him, his head bent thoughtfully forward. As she progressed his face grew dark and stern, and when she paused he said:

"He would come forward for the sake of getting into my good graces and reinstating himself in his position in this house."

"If he had that object in view, would he not have served his purpose better by pretending that he had discovered the truth of your story, pleading his mistake, and throwing himself on your mercy?"

"He is starved out and forced to capitulate; he is at the end of his resources, and so comes with the best story he can to make terms."

"The length of time that has elapsed between his enforced departure from his home and his attempted return to it, impresses me decidedly in his favour," said Madge. "During the greater portion of this time he has doubtless been occupied in making the research which he says has terminated so favourably, and as for his having come to the end of his resources, I ask you, Sir Geoffry, whether it is likely that a young man who has maintained himself, whether honestly or dishonestly, well or ill, we know not, but still who has maintained himself for such a length of time, is likely to be at his wit's end in the very flower of his youth?"

"You think then I ought to have listened to him?"

"Unquestionably, for your own sake. If he had produced the proofs which he stated himself to possess, the remorse which you must have felt would have been tempered by the thought that you had acted in good faith, and by the recovery and reinstatement of your discarded son. If he had not those proofs, or they were insufficient to convince you, you would have had the satisfaction of knowing that you had been right throughout. At present——"

"At present I have only lost my temper, and made a fool of myself. That is, I suppose, what you would say," said the general, looking up rather ruefully at his companion. "So I did, raised the whole house, and told Riley to put the boy out. But what on earth did you go away for, Mrs. Pickering? If you had been at home this would not have happened."

"It will not be difficult to remedy it yet, Sir Geoffry," said Madge, with a quiet smile. "You must write to him, and tell him to come here."

"Write to him!" cried the general. "I have not the least notion where he lives."

"I dare say we can manage to find out," said Madge.

"It is my belief you could manage to do anything you wished," said the general. "However, we will talk this matter over further; and there is another subject of great importance which I want to discuss with you later on. Now let us go into dinner."

The tone of his voice showed that his heart was softened, and Madge was inexpressibly gratified at the idea that she, of whom Gerald had once been so fond, and who, as he thought, had treated him so badly, might become the means of his reinstatement in his father's house, and in his proper position in society.

The subject was not alluded to by either Sir Geoffry or Madge during the rest of that evening. The short conversation with his housekeeper during their walk in the grounds had afforded the old general sufficient matter for reflection, and he sat buried in thought, dispensing with the reading of the newspaper, which he had missed so much during Madge's absence, and which he had intended to resume on her return. Madge herself was thoroughly tired out, and at a very early hour the little household was at rest.

The next morning brought Mr. Drage, who came up brimming over with news of the church congress, and intending to demolish Sir Geoffry in certain theological questions over which they were at issue, by cunningly devised arguments which had been used in the course of the clerical debate. But finding Mrs. Pickering had returned, and that the general was engaged out of doors, Mr. Drage availed himself of the opportunity to make his way to the housekeeper's room. There he found Madge, and after a few warm greetings on both sides, received from her a full account of her memorable visit to Sandown.

Mr. Drage listened with the deepest interest. Impressed as she was with the gravity of the crime about to be committed, and its probable consequences to herself and the wretched woman who was about to become a participator in it, Madge could scarcely avoid being amused, as she watched the various changes which played over Mr. Drage's face during the recital of the story. That such a crime as bigamy had been contemplated was horrifying to the simple country clergyman, whose ex-

perience of law breaking was derived from occasional attendance at the magistrates' meetings, where poaching and affiliation cases were the only troubles to the bench. But that a woman could be found who not merely did not shrink from the man who had endeavoured to entrap her into an illegal alliance, but actually announced her intention of fulfilling the contract and defying the world, was entirely beyond Mr. Drage's comprehension.

"And now you have heard all, and are in full possession of each circumstance of the case as it now stands, what do you recommend should be done?" asked Madge.

"I confess," said the rector, with a very blank and perplexed look, "that I am quite unable to advise you. I have never come across so determined a character as Mr. Vane appears to be; and this woman seems, from what you say, to be a perfect match for him. It is, of course, most horrible to have to sit by and witness an open infraction of the law, but we have at least the satisfaction of knowing that we have done our best to prevent it, even though the warning was not attended to."

"As you say, we have done our best, and there it must end. I am heartily sick of the trouble and vexation it has caused me. If there had remained in me one lingering spark of affection for my husband, it would have been extinguished by this last and greatest insult. My pride tells me that I have already proceeded too far in this matter, and that when he hears what I have done, as he will hear, sooner or later, he will ascribe my actions to my continued attachment to him, and my unwillingness to see him taken by another woman."

"Your pride may teach you that, but I have been reflecting as you spoke," said Mr. Drage, "and my conscience teaches me that we should not suffer this sin to be committed without one further attempt to prevent it. You have seen Mrs. Bendixen, and she has refused to listen to you. I will go to London and search for Mr. Vane; he is a man of the world, and will more readily comprehend the difficulties which beset him, and the danger in which they are liable to result."

"He is a desperate man," said Madge, "and one who would flinch from nothing where his interests were involved or his safety at stake. I should dread any meeting between you."

"I am grateful for your interest in me," said the rector, with the hectic flush rising in his cheek, "but I do not fear much for myself; and even were he to kill me——"

"I will not have you talk in that manner," said Madge, laying her hand lightly on his arm, and looking up earnestly into his face.

The Reverend Onesiphorus Drage had for some months past told himself that he had conquered his wild absorbing love for Mrs. Pickering, and that he only regarded her as a sister. There are so many of us who on certain subjects are frank and loyal to all others, and eminently deceitful to ourselves. When the rector left Mrs. Pickering's presence, he made his way to Sir Geoffry, whom he found still engaged in colloquy with the gardener. The old general was very pleased to see his clerical friend, shook him warmly by the hand, and promptly declined to enter into any of the church-congress questions or arguments which Mr. Drage had eagerly submitted to him, alleging that he had business of more pressing importance, on which the rector's advice was required.

Up and down the carriage sweep in front of the house walked the two gentlemen for more than an hour; the subject of their conversation being the same as that which had occupied the general and Mrs. Pickering on the previous evening. Even at greater length than he had spoken to his housekeeper, Sir Geoffry explained to his friend the story of his earlier life, the separation from his wife, the duel with Mr. Yeldham, the interview with Gerald when he bade the boy renounce his name and his position, and the recent interview when he ordered Riley to turn him from the door. If he had any doubt of the feelings with which this narrative would have been received, the behaviour of his companion would have soon settled his mind. Mr. Drage listened silently to all from the commencement of the story until the end. He never made the slightest verbal interruption; but as Sir Geoffry proceeded, the rector's head sunk upon his breast, and his hands, which had been clasped behind him, at last formed a refuge wherein his agitated face was hidden.

When the story came to an end, there was a long pause, broken by Sir Geoffry's saying:

"There is not much need to ask your opinion of my conduct in this matter, I see plainly that you are of the same mind as Mrs. Pickering, and consider that I have acted wrongly."

"I do," said Mr. Drage, raising his head, "most wrongly, and unlike a parent, unlike a Christian, unlike a gentleman!"

"Sir!" cried the old general, stopping short in his walk, and glaring fiercely at his friend.

"I repeat what I said, Sir Geoffry Heriot, and defy you to disprove my words. Was it like a gentleman to watch and spy upon the actions of your wife and her partner in the ball-room; was it like a Christian to shoot down this man upon the mere supposition of his guilt?"

"Shoot him down, sir?—he had his chance," cried the general.

"His chance!" echoed the rector, severely. "What chance had a dilettante poet, painter, musician, what not, a lounger in drawing-rooms and boudoirs, who probably never had a pistol in his hands in his life? What chance had he against you, a trained man of arms? Was it like a father for you to condemn this lad for keeping the oath which he had sworn to keep at his dying mother's bedside; to hunt him from your house when he came with his long-sought proofs of that mother's innocence?"

"You are a hard hitter, sir," said Sir Geoffry, eyeing him sternly. "You don't spare your adversaries!"

"Not when I think that there is a chance of rousing in them a spirit of remorse, or prompting them to actions of atonement."

"Pardon me one moment," said Sir Geoffry. "Before we talk of remorse and atonement, I should point out to you that I am not the only one to blame in this question. I am hot-tempered, I allow it. Nature and the life I have led settled that for me; but this boy is as hot tempered as I am, and has an insolent way with him, which is in the highest degree provoking. However, we have talked enough on my family matters for the present. Let us go in and see what Mrs. Pickering has provided for luncheon."

The rector knew his friend's peculiarities too well to attempt to renew the conversation at that time, and silently followed him into the house.

Before he went away the rector found an opportunity of telling Mrs. Pickering the subject of the conversation he had had with Sir Geoffry, and spoke earnestly about its unsatisfactory termination.

Mr. Drage imagined from Sir Geoffry's tone, and from the abrupt manner in which he had brought the discussion to a close, that he was still highly incensed against his son; but Madge was much more sanguine on being able to bring Gerald back to his proper place in his father's heart. She knew that, however harsh and curt the general's manner might be to Mr. Drage, or to any other of his friends, she had a mollifying power over him, which, duly exercised, never failed to soothe him in his most irrational moments. She did not say this to the rector, with whom she simply condoled, but she felt tolerably certain that the day would not pass over without the subject being again broached to her by the general.

She was wrong. In the afternoon she received a summons to the library, and found Sir Geoffry awaiting her.

"I will not trouble you to commence reading just now, Mrs. Pickering," said he, as he saw Madge opening the newspapers which had just arrived from London. "I want to talk to you upon a matter of some importance, not quite in your line perhaps, but one in which your strong common sense cannot fail to advise me well and usefully. You have heard me mention my friend Irving?"

"Mr. Irving, of Coombe Park?"

"The same; I have told you of my long friendship with him, and of his determination made long ago, and abided by ever since, to enter into no speculations which I do not approve of. Strange to think that a man of a City position and financial knowledge should choose to be governed in his investments by an old Indian officer, who knows little of money matters, and has never been on the Stock Exchange in his life! However, Irving is a Scotchman, and a great believer in luck; and as the first dabble on which I advised him turned out a lucky hit, he has relied upon me ever since, and has not done badly on the whole."

"Surely that is a mild way of putting it," said Madge. "I think I have heard you say that Mr. Irving is one of the richest men in England?"

"So he is; and that is so well known that the mere advertisement of his name is a mine of wealth to any affair with which he may happen to be connected, such confidence does it inspire. Rich as he is, though, he still likes making the money, still takes a pleasure in adding to his heap, crescit amor nummi—what was it we used to say at school? Irving has been speculating very little lately; indeed, I began to fancy that he had given it up altogether. But of late I have had several letters from him, each increasing in warmth and keenness about a certain mining company called the Terra del Fuegos, in which he is half persuaded to embark."

"The Terra del Fuegos?" repeated Madge.

"That is the name. Surely, Mrs. Pickering," said the old general, jocularly, "you are not a shareholder in that promising undertaking?"

"No," said she, "and yet the name

seems to be familiar to me. Where can I have heard it?"

"Most probably it has caught your eye when you have been kindly reading over to me the prices of stocks and shares, and, being an odd name, has remained on your memory. However, Irving, though more predisposed in favour of this concern than of anything else which I can remember for many years, has abided by his old practice of referring to me for his final decision. I have read through all the printed documents connected with the undertaking, which in themselves are eminently satisfactory; but I require a little further information on certain points, and wrote so to Irving. He referred my letter to the company, who must consider his cohesion to their undertaking of great importance, as they proposed to send down two of their body, the chairman and the general manager, to explain matters to me."

"The general manager!" cried Madge.

"And the chairman," said the general. "I forget their names, but I have them somewhere in the printed papers. These gentlemen will be down here to-morrow or the day after. Of course they will stay in the house, and I will ask you to be good enough to make preparations for their reception."

Madge took the first opportunity to escape from the library, and seek the solitude of her own room, while Sir Geoffry was prosing on the mention of the general manager, and gave her the clue to the train of thought which the name of Terra del Fuegos had started. Philip Vane was the general manager to the Terra del Fuegos. She recollected Mr. Drage having obtained that information from his father's clerk in the City. And he was coming there to Wheatcroft! He must not see her there. She must find some pretext for absenting herself during his stay. Could this visit to Wheatcroft have any connexion with the telegram which had summoned him from Sandown, and which, as she believed, was the original of that of which Rose had forwarded to her the copy? What connexion could there be between the two events she could not tell, but that there was a link between them she firmly believed.

She took the paper from the pocket of the dress which she had worn while travelling, and spread it out before her. She pored over it for an hour, puzzling her brain in endeavouring to assort and re-adjust the jumbled mass of letters before her. It was of no use, she would give it it up for the present, her head might be clearer another time perhaps. She opened her desk, intending to lock the paper away in it, when suddenly she started and uttered loud cry of joy. From the small leather note-case at the bottom of the desk, one of the few relics of Philip Vane which she possessed, she drew a long strip of paper, with a column of letters in consecutive order on either side inscribed in the following manner:

A—F
B—R
C—M
D—B

and so on. This column was headed "Writing." Under the other, headed "Reading," these letters were reversed.

"My memory serves me well," said Madge, with delight, "and I am repaid for having kept this note-case and its contents so long. This is a key to some cipher which Philip must evidently have used at one period of his life. Let us see whether it fits this message. If it does, I think the translation will not be difficult."

She turned the slip of paper with the "Reading" side uppermost, and by its aid commenced deciphering the telegram and arranging it into plain language. After some minutes' hard labour, she read the following as the result:

"You must come up at once. Irving is impracticable, and refuses to join until he sees his friend Sir G. H.'s signature to the deed. That signature must be procured at any price. Come up at once."

"That signature must be obtained at any price," repeated Madge. "I don't think it will be obtained. I am sure it will not if I am a match for Philip Vane!"

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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER IV. LIFE AND DEATH.

SIR JOHN and Lady Archbold, who lived at Camlough in the hills, had an only daughter, about a year older than May. They loved this child better than their own souls and bodies, and as much as they hated the thought of death; which is saying a good deal. The fame of the beauty and spirit of this girl had travelled to Monasterlea, and many a time May had stood on tiptoe, looking over the hedges, to see her riding past by her father's side, with her yellow hair streaming on the wind.

The little girl at Camlough was one of May's dream-playmates. She had many such companions, who shared all her confidences, and joined in her games. Another was the grim stone angel of the passage, who was petted and talked to in the daylight, but rather shunned when the night began to come on. The girl from Camlough was May's especial friend. This little person was always supposed to be at hand, and her opinion was taken on all subjects. So fond was May of this little girl, that she would sit for hours upon the highest step of the belfry-stairs, gazing through a hole in the ruined wall across the land towards Camlough. There, behind the Golden Mountain, she was told there stood a castle of delights, of which her friend was a princess. Wonderful travelling carriages would appear upon the lonesome road, on their way to this palace of enchantment. May had once been at the inn at the foot of the mountain, where Sir John's huge oxen were kept in waiting for his guests. She had seen the horses taken out and the oxen yoked to, and the fine ladies screaming a little, when the oxen began to pull and the carriages began moving up the fine paved road cut in the steep mountain's face. From her belfry she could trace the movement of the oxen on that distant road, could watch them to the very rim of the crown of the mountain, see them quiver there a moment against the sun, then drop out of her sight into unknown realms of bliss.

But the little girl at Camlough fell sick. The palace of delights was a saddened palace. The echo of the anguish of those parents who knew not how to suffer was heard over the moors and through the hills. The child was sick to death; rallied, fell back, wasted, and grew weaker, and at last was given over as incurable. Doctors took their way from Camlough. It was said that Lady Archbold quarrelled with the last who lingered, and would have waited a little longer; that she ordered him from the place because he would not tell her that her child should surely live. Then the frantic parents gave way to despair.

One hot dark night, Midsummer Eve, Katherine Archbold lay in a trance like death. Her father was sitting by her bed. Her mother walked about the room close by, mad with rebellious agony. The short darkness of the warm summer night hung heavily on this dwelling of luxury. The silver lamps burned softly, and the odour of flowers came through the open windows. The servants were afraid to sleep, knowing that at any moment death might arrive. And after that they knew not what to expect. For her ladyship was determined that the child should not die.

There was a poor fool sitting down in

the kitchen, muttering to himself as idiots do, and nobody was minding him. He was an idiot from birth, one of those who "live among the people." He wandered from place to place, and was welcome everywhere; for people say such as he bring luck.

This poor lad was sitting in the kitchen of the castle of Camlough while Katherine Archbold lay dying up-stairs. The cook had placed meat and beer before him, but the fool had heard rumours of the trouble that was in the place, and he would not eat as usual. Not that he cared much for the young lady herself, for she had often tormented him; not that he cared much for Lady Archbold, who seldom bestowed notice on such as he; but his simple heart was sore for Sir John. Sir John always threw him a shilling when he passed him, and sent him to the cook to get his dinner; and he nodded to him and smiled at him, and Con the idiot knew a smile from a frown.

Two or three servants were talking of the deadliness of the child's disease, of the uselessness of doctors, of the grief of the father and mother, and of fifty things besides. All at once Con started from his seat, and sped to the kitchen door.

"Hallo, my boy!" cried the cook, "you stay here for the night!"

But Con only flung a grin of delight over his shoulder, and disappeared; not out of doors, but, to the dismay of all present, up-stairs, where he had no business to be.

Sir John, sitting by the side of his daughter, with his face buried in his hands, felt a touch upon his shoulder, and looked up with a great start. There were Con's white face and black eyes gleaming at him in the dull light of the sick-room.

"Master!" said the idiot, caressingly.

Sir John was about to shake him off, but the great tenderness and sympathy in the lad's face caught his attention.

"Master, take miss down mountain!" said the fool in an excited whisper; and he pointed with his finger to the open window, beyond which the day was already breaking, leaving the dark peaks of the hills all naked against the pale rifts between the clouds.

"Father Felix, master! Father Felix, master!"

Sir John started again, and a flush rose to his face. He guessed on the instant at the meaning of the fool. Every one in the country knew that the sick were brought to Father Felix. Many and many a time Sir John had laughed at the folly. Yesterday he would have laughed at it. But now, being in despair, he felt differently.

Within the next half-hour the whole castle was astir. All the people of the place knew that a strange thing was about to happen. Lady Archbold, docile for once, hurried on with quivering hands her most sumptuous riding-habit, and placed a hat with long feathers and jewelled buckle above her ghastly face. A litter was constructed and covered with a rich coverlet, and the insensible maiden was placed on it, supported by pillows and swathed in costly wrappings. A heap of June flowers lay on her feet. Servants in splendid liveries mounted the finest horses in the stables, and carried baskets of fruit and flowers, and vessels of silver and gold, upon their saddles. The antique jewel-hilted sword, or skein, which was the most precious heir-loom of the family, and the ancient banner with their arms, were carried conspicuously in front of the procession. Six stout retainers carried the litter on their shoulders, and the woful parents rode a little in advance on either side. A crowd of servants, labourers, tradespeople, and tenants, who poured out at short notice from the settlement of Camlough in the lap of the Golden Mountain, made a motley rear-guard to the train. Down the rugged passage of the steep mountain came winding slowly this mournful and vainglorious procession, with the glory of the midsummer morning flashing on the rich draperies of the litter, the pale adorned figure of the prostrate child, and the awed, wondering faces around her. And far on before them fled the swift-footed fool, the herald and vanguard of the train, with his arms extended as a signal of alarm, and all the fires of the sunrise burning in his eyes.

Early that morning little May had climbed the belfry to send the wishes of her heart to her sick dream-playmate. With two level hands above her eyebrows she had screamed aloud, so sharply that the crows started cawing out of the ivy.

"Aunt Martha," she cried, flying into the breakfast parlour, "there is a strange slow procession coming down the Golden Mountain."

"Guests returning," said Miss Martha, comfortably, speaking from behind the steam of her teapot.

"There are no visitors at Camlough this long, long time," said May, who was as pale as the white rose in the garden.

"That is true," said Miss Martha, doubtfully, "but what are you afraid of?"

"I fear that it may be the little girl's funeral," said May, and burst into a passion of tears.

"Impossible;" said Miss Martha; "we should have heard of her death."

"Do not cry, little one," said Father Felix. "It is no doubt an ordinary funeral from the hills." And he stole away to his chapel to pray for the rest of some unknown soul.

"Now you take the telescope, May," said her aunt, "and amuse yourself watching these travellers. And don't you fret yourself for nothing, my dear. As for me I have to boil my preserves."

Funerals were familiar events to Miss Martha.

"But there are bright things shining in the riders' hands, and a bier with a cover as white as snow," muttered May in her belfry, telescope in hand. And then about noon she beheld wild Con coming flying along the road to Monasterlea.

"News, Con? News from Camlough?" cried May, speeding to meet him, and clapping her hands to attract his notice. But he dashed past her without heeding, leaped over the gravestones like a goat, dived into the cloisters through a breach in the wall, nor paused till he burst into the chapel.

The old priest had been kneeling in prayer before his altar, but rose in dismay at the rude noise. Wild Con dropped prostrate at his feet.

"Master bring miss down hill," cried the fool. "Father Felix make her laugh and walk about. Aha! little missy get up quite well."

Father Felix patted him soothingly on the head. The idiot was quivering with excitement. He began to laugh and cry as the sound of many feet and voices became audible through the window. But the priest signed to him to be still and reverent, and he crouched upon the ground, covering his face with his hands.

The door opened again, and May came radiantly into the chapel, stepping on tiptoe, and looking like a spirit.

"Uncle," she whispered, clasping his hands, "Sir John and Lady Archbold have come all the way from Camlough with their daughter, who is sick. You will cure her, uncle? Oh, you will make her well."

The old man changed colour and trembled. "My child," he said, "you know not what you say. But I will go and learn what they ask of me."

The procession had poured itself into the graveyard. The litter had been placed upon a fallen tombstone. The white velvet trappings swept the earth, and the flowers and baubles glowed and glittered with new lustre and colour in the brilliant air. A tawny-cheeked woman in a scarlet shawl held a canopy of white silk over the sick girl's wan face, and over the loose golden hair, which lay in a shower among the nettles. Sir John had alighted, and, with hat in hand, advanced to meet the monk. Lady Archbold sat haughtily on her horse.

"Good sir," said Sir John, "our daughter is sick. All natural aid has failed to cure her. We come to you, begging you will restore her. We have brought you gifts—the most precious things we could select on the instant—but they are a small part of what we are prepared to give you."

The old man glanced all around, for the pomp and pride of the scene troubled him. As he stood there, with the eyes of these great people upon him, he looked to worldly view a meagre figure, both as to flesh and garb, yet with a certain dignity of age and holiness which could not be questioned, still less understood. Sir John grew impatient at a moment's delay.

"Sir," he said, "we are in anguish. Is it not your calling to succour the distressed?"

"Alas, sir," said the old man, "take away your gifts. God alone can do what you desire. I can pray in your name, but He looks to the humility of your heart."

Lady Archbold now pressed forward.

"Sirrah, obey!" she cried, wildly. "You *shall* exert your power—we care not much if it be of heaven or of hell. We only want our child! Oh, me, we only want our child!" And she broke out into a wail of despair.

"Lady," said the old man, looking at her with mild pity, "you speak to me as if I were a sorcerer. I am no such thing, neither am I a saint—only the poorest of God's servants. And I hesitate, fearing no mercy will be shown which is demanded in such a spirit."

Lady Archbold's face sank beneath his glance. She flung herself from her horse, and went down on her knees till the feathers of her hat touched the earth.

"Oh," she moaned, "tell me how to feel that this be done. You shall put ashes on my head, and I will be the humblest poor woman in these mountains. I have lived without religion, but I will try to be a Christian henceforward. Only ask your God to give me back my child!"

Many women began to sob around to see the proud lady humbled thus. The old

priest himself had tears in his eyes as he answered her appeal.

"Daughter," he said, "I will do as you wish. Let us all, then, kneel, and crave this blessing."

All sank upon their knees in the grass. Some supported themselves against the broken crosses, some leaned upon the mounds of the graves. Many women were weeping, many men trembling. Lady Archbold crouched with her face to the very moss of the earth. It was long, whispered the people, since she had knelt before. She shuddered as the priest made a loud distinct prayer, to which the mass of the people responded with a sound that was like the roaring of a troubled sea.

But soon there was silence in the grave-yard. The priest had sunk prostrate in silent prayer. The very rooks had stopped their clamour in the belfry. The people held their breath, and feared even to sway their bent bodies. Only a lark dared to sing, and sang long and ecstatically, rising higher and higher, till, only for the echo of its notes, it might have seemed to be consumed in the amber fires of the sun. It seemed to May that the singing of this lark was the voice of the old man's prayer, as it pierced its urgent way to heaven.

An hour passed, and the kneeling people began to grow weary. Lady Archbold glanced once at her child, crouched to the earth again, and groaned aloud. Another hour passed, and a woman fainted, and some children stole away to play at a distance. It was far in the third hour when a loud scream rang out upon the air.

The scream came from May, who was close to the sick girl, and had seen her long hair stir among the nettles. The next moment Katherine Archbold sat up, and began gazing curiously around her. First a hoarse murmur of awe ran through the crowd; then there arose such a cheer from the hearts of the mountain men as had never been heard among these walls before. The startled crows set up a wild clamour round the belfry. The mother rushed towards her daughter, stumbled among the people and fell, but was raised by the strong, kind arms of women, and carried by them to the side of her Katherine. Mother, father, and child were locked in a wild embrace, amidst the sobs and exclamations of the people.

It was some minutes before any one remembered the old priest. Little May's shrill voice again raised, and her slight arm beating back the people, first recalled him to their minds. Then they looked on the ground where he lay upon his face. They turned him on his back, and found he had passed from prayer into a swoon. Now Miss Martha bustled up in tears. She had knelt in the distance upon her door-step, half joining in the scene and half resenting it, knowing too well the consequences of such efforts for her brother. She gathered his frail body in her arms, and, with the help of friends, had him carried to the house.

"Ah, yes, good sir," she said, bitterly, to Sir John, "he has given your daughter health, but I greatly fear she has given him his death."

"I pray God no," said Sir John.

Miss Martha was too hospitable to suffer the people from Camlough to return without refreshment, and bestowed on them such entertainment as it was in her power to give. The crowd soon scattered to carry far and wide the story of the morning, and Sir John and his wife and child honoured Miss Martha's dwelling with their presence.

May invited Katherine to her own little room, having leave to wait upon her, whilst Miss Martha was attending to Lady Archbold. To this Katherine submitted with a languid condescension.

"Have you not a better frock than this?" asks she, surveying the robe of thick white muslin in which May was attiring her with tender hands.

"Alas, no!" said May, crest-fallen, "I always thought it was a pretty frock, but I see it is not good enough for you."

"I should think not," said Katherine, flinging her head about, and tossing her gold mane in May's eyes. "You should see what handsome frocks I wear at Camlough; but what makes your eyes so red, little girl?"

"I wept this morning," said May, who was ready to weep again. "I wept because you were so sick."

"How funny!" said Katherine, laughing; "I'm sure I should not weep if you were sick. But I like you very well, and you shall come to Camlough. You are a nice little girl in your own way; but you are not so beautiful as I am."

"Oh, no!" said May, eagerly, "I could not be so silly as to think so."

"You are a *very* pleasant little girl," said Katherine; "I shall certainly have you with me at Camlough."

Before Sir John and Lady Archbold left Monasterlea, they stood by the old priest's bedside, to offer him their thanks. At her husband's suggestion, Lady Archbold expressed her sorrow for wild words which had been uttered in her grief.

The old man was ill, and could not speak much. "Forget all that," he said, "but there is one thing I would bid you remember. Guard well this soul that God has given back into your keeping. See that in gaining her you have not lost her. Make her modest and holy, gentle and wise."

But Lady Archbold's pride was on the return. She thought herself lectured, and turned away with impatience, which she hardly took the trouble to conceal. At the same moment Katherine was led unwillingly into the room, glancing about the place with an air of scorn. The pallid old man upon the couch was an object of ridicule in her eyes. When her father placed her beneath the hand which was extended to bless her, she drew back in disgust. And then they all departed, and the train went back to Camlough.

And May hid herself in her belfry to weep. This was her first real grief. Katherine had disappointed her. The sweet dream-playmate was no more. Pride shown to herself she did not mind, but contempt of her uncle the loving heart could not brook.

And after all this Miss Martha's anxious words came true; for in two days Father Felix was dead.

CHAPTER V. THE HEIR TO THE WOODS.

Paul Finiston and his mother had for many years lived in a high narrow house, on the Quays, in Dublin, close by where a light bridge springs over the dark running river. Tall spars congregated beside it, and old brown sails flapped heavily in the water, turning orange and red in the sun. High above there were domes against the sky, and in the shadow of the up-hill distance loomed the ghostly outlines of many peaks and pinnacles.

Mrs. Finiston was a frail creature, who was chained to a sofa in her dingy room. For years she had had nothing strong to protect her but her trust in God, nothing bright to look at but the face of her boy. Yet with these two comforts she had managed to get on pretty well, and now her son was turning into a tall brave lad. Only let her live for a few years more and she might free him for ever from the dangers that beset him.

She had saved her husband from the curse of his family, and she would also try to save her son. Her husband had been the brother of Simon the miser. He had obtained with difficulty a commission in the army, and had been sent into the world to seek his fortune. It had been her labour to keep him from longing after ill-omened possessions. She was tender, upright, and somewhat superstitious, and the curse of Tobereevil had been the terror of her life. The dread of it had made her patient in poverty, and peculiarly unselfish in her love; and her patience and love had so influenced her husband that he had never shown a desire to touch the rusting treasures of his race. Husband and wife had paid one visit together to Tobereevil, and had hastened away, shuddering at the wretchedness they had witnessed. But now he had been dead many years.

Mrs. Finiston was in receipt of a small pension, and possessed also a trifling annuity of her own. But all this little income would vanish when she died. No wonder, then, that she prayed to be spared. No wonder that she stinted and saved with the hope of being enabled to give her son a profession. She had determined against making him a soldier. As a soldier he would be always poor; and in poverty, there was that danger of the longing for the riches of the misers of Tobereevil. She would hedge round his future from that risk.

Her high sitting-room window was bowed out towards the river, and the narrow panes between its ancient pilasters afforded a view over the bridge into the sunshine. The dome of the Four Courts shone finely in the distance above the masts, through the soft amber haze of a summer's day. She had resolved that under its shelter her Paul should yet win fame and gold: honourable fame, which he would prefer to wealth, gold, honestly earned, which he would generously share and spend. There were many great men even in her own little day who had grown up out of smaller beginnings. The mother on the sofa recalled a dozen such.

With a view to all this she had deprived herself of comfort that he might be taught by the best tutors in Dublin. He was now seventeen, a student of Trinity, and had taken a fair share of honours for his time. He was not a genius, nor over-fond of books, but he loved his mother, and appreciated the sacrifices she was making for his sake. And, though he smiled a little at her anxiety about the curse, his horror of it was even greater than her own.

Thus Paul Finiston, sitting among his books in the rude old window, would often also raise his eyes and hopes to that dome of promise against the clouds. He would stifle in his heart certain yearnings for an open-air life; for travel, for change, for the ownership of country acres, and the

power of mastership in a dominion of his own. He would determine within him to let no weakness of purpose throw him in the way of temptation. He would become a learned hard-headed man of business, who should found a new house to redeem the honour of his name; and above all should have no leisure for bad dreams.

"Paul," said his mother one evening as he came in and settled down to his books, "I have had a letter from the west."

"From the west!" echoed Paul, startled, thinking of the miser.

"From dear old Martha Mourne. She is coming to Dublin on business with her lawyer. And she says, 'I will bring poor Timothy's child to see you.'"

"Who is poor Timothy's child?" asked Paul. "Her niece? I hope she is not grown up." For he was very shy of women, having been accustomed to speak to none but his mother.

"She is a child of about twelve years old, if I remember. And you must be kind to her, Paul. You must meet them at the coach and bring them here."

Paul pulled a face over his book, a sign of dismay which he would not have shown his mother for the world. He tried to be glad that she should see a friend, but for himself he had a dread of old women and children. Still he would be kind to them and civil to them, if he could. He would meet them at the coach-office, of course, and carry all their band-boxes, if need be. He would pour out the tea as he was accustomed to do, and help little missy and old madam to cake. But after all these things were resolved upon, it could surely never hurt any one that he should kick his old boots about his own little room, and wish the good people safely back where they came from.

At four o'clock next day the coach came in. It was a long, rose-coloured evening towards the spring, full of soft promise of sweet months yet to come; bars of red fell across the bridge, and spikes of burnished gold tipped the clustering spars, while masses of light and shade rolled up and down the shifting shrouds, gambolling like living things.

Paul had laid the cloth, and brought the fat roast chicken and the slices of cold ham from the nearest cook's shop; had set forth the fresh lemon-cakes and the strawberry preserves. The tea was in the teapot and the kettle on the hob. He had placed the muffins at a prudent distance from the fire, where his mother on her sofa could turn them at her leisure; and, all these formidable arrangements made, he sauntered slowly down the quay with his hands in his pockets. He gazed with new interest at the movements of the men in the boats. He spoke to them from the wall, and was pleased when they invited him on board; but the very last moment of lingering arrived, and Paul was at his post when the coach drove up.

He scanned the faces inside, and recognised his charge with a thrill of relief. They did not appear awful after all, and they looked very tired, and very glad of him at the door. This no doubt made Paul look also glad to see them, and the introduction was quite pleasant and friendly. There was nothing to object to about Miss Martha, except that her bonnet was a little bruised on one side; but that was from falling asleep against the side of the coach. She looked thoroughly a lady in her neat garments of lavender and black, and her quick-witted ways seemed to announce that she was accustomed to be no inconvenience to any one. Beside her sat a slim little maiden, in a grey pelisse and a deep straw bonnet tied down with white, who was cherishing fondly a basket of roses, which had faded, in her lap. And, when the bonnet turned round, there were discovered under it cheeks flushed with fatigue, and bright eager eyes; a sweet little bloomy carnation of a face.

The travellers, upon their part, saw a strong, graceful, good-looking lad. The face was as good a face as ever woman looked upon. The features were manly, the eyes dark and steady under finely marked brows. They were sweet-tempered eyes, yet suggestive of passion. The forehead was broad; and the temples too full for any man, but a poet. The half-curled locks were thick and fair, and the mouth looked particularly truthful. It was not a very firm mouth, and yet not weak. Truthful-looking and changeful, and very apt to smile. And it smiled broadly as Paul Finiston handed young missy and old madam out of the coach.

As for parcels, Miss Martha had only two small bags and a large umbrella, and it was as much as Paul could do to get leave to carry the latter.

"No, my dear," she said, "though I like you for offering. It is a good sign to see a lad polite to old women. But I'd rather you'd take hands with little May to keep her steady on the crossings."

So Paul marched forward with May under one arm and the umbrella under the other, and Miss Martha followed with a

bag in each hand. And, in spite of his dread of old women and children, Paul forgot to be uneasy lest any of the Trinity fellows should happen to stroll down the street at the wrong minute, and behold this procession crossing the bridge.

THE WHITE WITCH OF COMBE ANDREW.

"I'll just go and see my Aunt Hagley: see if I don't!"

It was Mary Bernal who spoke, and it was Jane Dalby to whom she spoke; and what she said she said with an air, as if more was lying behind than the mere words would show.

Jane Dalby tossed her head. "Go, and welcome!" she answered disdainfully. "For my part," she continued, "I wouldn't own as glib as you to an aunt like that old Hagley. She's none such a dear to be so proud of!"

"All very well, Jane, for you to cast stones at aunt," said Mary with a superior manner. "Me and them as knows——" Here she stopped.

"Now then, go on, can't you?" cried Jane. "Out with it. You and them as knows what?"

"Well! we knows what we knows," said Mary, after a pause. "And now you're answered, Jane."

With which she left the servants' hall triumphantly, as one who has at least given the enemy a check, if nothing worse; going up-stairs to adorn her young mistress, Belle Loder; for it was dressing time; while Jane went to do the like office for her young lady, Rose Kenealy; both maids having the same object at heart for each—the fascination of Major Julius Crewkherne, owner of Crewkherne Manor hard by, and the handsomest man in Devonshire, as he was one of the best matches.

Now Crewkherne Manor and the Loder property lay handy to each other; and it had always been one of the favourite wishes of both houses, that the Crewkherne boy and the Loder girl would take a fancy to each other when they grew up, and so enclose the two estates in a ring fence that would suit every one concerned. Each property alone was well enough; but, both together, they would place the possessor among the best of the county, and would raise the joint families of Loder-Crewkherne to a position second to none in England. Wherefore it was, that when old Darcy Crewkherne died and his son the major came home from India to reign in his stead, every one said it was a thing so plainly marked out by Providence—and the local map—that the major couldn't but see it, and do as his father had wished him to do; namely, take Miss Belle, and in time the Loder property, so soon as the days of mourning were at an end.

And perhaps things would have gone their way if the Loders could have managed to keep the major close, and not have let any one else have a chance. For he was fairly enough inclined to Miss Belle, when he first returned, and showed his liking frankly. But in an evil hour for her he accepted an invitation to stay a few days at Martin's Tor, the Rawdons' place; and there he found Rose Kenealy, Mrs. Rawdon's orphaned, penniless niece, whom they had adopted and brought up, and who was "out" for her first year.

To be sure the Rawdons, mindful of the common talk, had been careful to ask Belle Loder at the same time as the major; while, to do them justice, no thought of little Rose, or her possible attractions, had entered into their calculations. She was but a child yet to them; and they did not think of her marrying, any more than if she had been but ten years old instead of eighteen. They had known well and liked heartily old Darcy Crewkherne, and they had liked Julius too, when a boy; and they wished to be neighbourly, that was all. And as Julius was anxious to both make new and re-establish old relations, he had gone to Martin's Tor willingly; and when he had seen little Rose he had remained more willingly. It was a case of love at first sight; and the major was a man of a clear mind and determined will.

There could not be a more striking contrast between two girls than there was between Belle Loder and Rose Kenealy; and the contrast was not only on the outside. Belle was a tall, largely made, sleepy-looking girl with a dead white skin, a profusion of straight and silky flaxen hair, and heavy-lidded eyes of light hazel, with singularly large pupils. But you did not often see her eyes, for she had a trick of keeping them half closed; and only when she wished to produce an effect did she open them fully. Rose, on the contrary, was a small, slight, vivacious creature, with a curly head of brightest brown, rose-red cheeks, and large dark eyes that changed with the light, being sometimes blue and sometimes grey, but always bright and frank, and tender or merry as the humour took her. They were true Irish eyes, in-

herited from her father, and were as eloquent as other people's words. And the first sight of them bewitched Julius Crewkherne.

That was the very phrase they had used in the kitchen, when discussing the bearing of the major towards the two young ladies. Miss Belle, she was the one as ought to be, but Miss Rose, she had bewitched him. And the word was not used without meaning; for the Devonshire folk believe in witches to this day; witches both white and black; witches who cast a spell and witches who take it off again; witches that do harm and they that do good. Wherein was the sting of Mary Bernal's words, which Jane Dalby had understood well enough; for Aunt Hagley, down at Combe Andrew, was a white witch of power, and renowned as such through all the country side.

Long before the dinner-bell rang and the rest of the guests had assembled, Major Julius Crewkherne lounged into the drawing-room; and almost immediately after came Rose Kenealy.

As Rose came in, fresh and simple as usual, her dark-brown curly hair caught back by a broad blue ribbon, and her white dress looped here and there with blue, her small waist trimly belted, yet leaving her free and elastic, the major thought her the loveliest little rosebud of a girl he had ever seen; and with a nature as sweet and pure as her face. That frank look of hers was enough for him. Rose blushed to the very roots of her hair when she saw who was standing there in the bay window alone; but she looked only prettier for blushing; and as she did not attempt to run away, the major liked her all the better for her girlish embarrassment.

He came out from the bay of the window, and met her midway. It was a rare chance to see her alone; and he had made up his mind to profit by the first that offered.

"What pretty flowers!" he said, pointing to the flowers in her waistband. They were only a few sprays of jessamine, but he spoke as if they were something quite rare.

"I am so fond of jessamine," said Rose, simply.

"So am I," returned the major. "Will you give me one for my coat?"

"If you like," said Rose.

"And fasten it in for me?"

This was coming to rather close quarters; and Rose was not used to gentlemen's coats. Hesitating then a little, and blushing a good deal, only complying because to refuse would be even more awkward, the girl, hanging down her head and trembling all over, came quite close to the major, and taking a spray from her waist, tried to fasten it into his coat. But her fingers were marvellously slow and heavy, and she bungled over her simple task in an unaccountable way. She felt as if she were going to faint, to die, to laugh aloud, or burst into tears; she did not indeed know how or what she felt; and it did not help her when the major, suddenly taking that little quivering hand in his, kissed it tenderly, saying in a soft whisper as he held it up to his cheek:

"May I ask your uncle to give me this, Rose? Will you give it me yourself?"

The girl made no answer. She only drooped her pretty head still lower, while her blushes faded into absolute paleness, and her slight figure trembled more.

"Do you love me, Rose?" the major went on to say. "Do you love me well enough to like to stay with me for ever, and marry me, and be my little wife? Will you not speak to me, my darling?"

"Yes, I do love you," said Rose, in a low voice.

And then the major took her in his arms, and lifted her fairly off her feet, as he kissed her silently, his heart, as hers, too full for words. And when he set her down again she fled, frightened, happy, confused, in such trouble of joy as to be almost pain, till she found herself in faithful Jane's sympathetic arms.

This day at dinner no one knew what ailed Rose that she looked so shy, and yet so happy; or what had come into her face to render her so beautiful. Only the major knew, and only Miss Loder guessed.

So now the thing was done; and Major Julius Crewkherne, the great match of the country, had committed himself to Miss Rose Kenealy, a girl without a penny, just a pretty little maid with bright eyes, rose-red cheeks, a frank smile, and a true heart. While here was his naturally appointed bride, Miss Belle, who had everything in her favour, shunted to the side, passed over, as we might say jilted.

When Belle Loder heard the news, not the keenest observer could have said that she suffered, or indeed have told that she felt at all. It was Mrs. Rawdon herself who told her, quite apologetically, and with many-repeated assurances that she had been as much taken by surprise as any one could be. She had never thought of such a thing! Rose, of all persons in

the world, little more than a mere child yet, only just out of the nursery!

On which Miss Loder, who until now had been sitting, as if carved in alabaster, counting her fan-sticks, suddenly lifted up her eyes and looked Mrs. Rawdon full in the face. And her look was so sudden, so fierce, so direct, her eyes were so large, the pupils so dilated, the look so fixed, that poor Mrs. Rawdon turned quite pale, and looked as if she were going to faint. Then Belle dropped her broad white lids again, took once more to counting her fan-sticks, and drawled out, in a low and level voice:

"Yes, just so; but, you see, at eighteen it is rather late to consider a girl as a child, and Major Crewkherne is a good match where there is no fortune."

Which last observation affronted Mrs. Rawdon, and destroyed all her sympathy for Miss Loder's disappointment.

If riches give social influence, knowledge gives moral power; and not Mr. Darcy Crewkherne himself, when he was alive—and he had been the king of those parts, so to speak—had the hold on the people that Dame Hagley had, Mary Bernal's aunt. To the outer eye she was just a tall, dark-browed, powerful, and still handsome woman, of about sixty, living in a solitary mud hovel set in the heart of a wild and desolate combe or valley, where nothing grew on the hill-sides save gorse and bracken and heather, and where even sheep could find no pasturage; but to the eye of faith she was greater than the greatest, holding the power of the viewless ones of the air in her hand, and holding with these the keys of life and death. Yet if spirits thronged to do her bidding, they were spirits of less malevolence, if of greater power, than those which obey the black witch. It was the black witch who banned, and Dame Hagley who removed the ban at the grievous cost and suffering of the former. And it was well known that not the wickedest old witch or wizard of them all but trembled before her, and had cause to repent her evil deeds if Dame Hagley took her in hand.

"That cursed little girl has bewitched the major, and my aunt shall know the rights of it," said Mary Bernal to herself, when she heard the news; it was Miss Belle herself who told her. "I'll go over to Combe Andrew to-morrow."

It was a hot and fiery sunset when Mary, getting leave for the evening, set out to her aunt's. It was a brave thing of her to do, for the way was lonely, and not only the valley had a bad name, but many a place by which she had to pass. Years ago there had been a murder on the cliffs, and the body had been buried in the very hovel where Dame Hagley lived; then a child had been found cast like a dead sheep in a deserted quarry; and a man had committed suicide at the entrance of the combe. So that, on the whole, it was an awful district all round, and one cause of Dame Hagley's influence was that she dared to live where others dared hardly pass. But her very living there added to the general terrors of the place.

People wondered when they saw Mary setting her face towards the cliff path; but Mary shared some of her aunt's courage. She "favoured" her in appearance, and it was not thought unlikely by more than one that she might follow in her steps, and take up the trade when the other let it fall. Still, for all that, it was a bold thing for a young woman of thirty to go along that lonely cliff in the evening, with the sun setting so fiery red, and the black loneliness, the haunted depths of Combe Andrew to follow. But Mary had become interested in this matter of the major and Miss Belle, and it was not a little that would have turned her back.

About an hour's hard walking brought her to the point where, deep in the darkness below, she saw a faint glimmer which told her that her aunt was at home. It was almost dark by now, but Mary knew the way, and skirted its dangers dexterously. She was quite free and undaunted, and did not even start when once a straying sheep came full butt against her, and once she nearly fell over the dead carcass of another. Presently she came down the hill, and along the narrow winding way that led to the hovel.

Her aunt heard her step, and came out to the door.

"I knew you were a-coming," she said, quietly; "and I've made your tea."

"That's good," said Mary. "It's a rough road."

The two women were strangely undemonstrative in manner to each other. There were no feminine effusions, no endearments, such as most women of all classes indulge in, but they met and spoke together like two men. And, indeed, handsome and bold and strong as they were, they were not unlike bearded men, and they were like each other. The same low, broad brow, the same firm eyebrows, the same dark and steady eyes, the same fleshy lips tightly shut, so cruel in repose, so sweet when smiling, and the

same commanding height. They were as much alike as though they were mother and daughter; and they were equally formidable.

"So you knew I was a-coming?" said Mary, after a long silence, during which she had drunk her tea and eaten her cake with a relish.

"Yes; They told me."

"Maybe They told you why, then?" said Mary, looking into her aunt's face with simple faith.

The older woman nodded. "Yes; They told me that too," she answered, watching her niece.

"And can you do it, aunt? Can you take off the spell?" said Mary, earnestly.

"I never knew of one I couldn't," said Dame Hagley.

"And it is a spell, aunt, ain't it now? She has bewitched him?"

"No fear," answered her aunt.

"What else can it be?" cried Mary.

"What else, indeed!" echoed her aunt.

"There's Miss Belle, made for him, as one may say, brought up together a'most, and with a fine fortune when her father goes. And her father and his too, that wished it so. And here comes this sly little Rose Kencaly, a mere beggar to Miss Belle, and not half so pretty. And there's the major, clean mad about her, and gone and asked her. It can't be right; it must be a spell!"

"It ain't aught else," said Dame Hagley, taking up the clue she had been waiting for. "It is a spell, Mary, and the major is bewitched. Can't you bring Miss Belle here, and I'll let her see the face as has done it?"

Mary shook her head. "It's too rough a road, aunt, and Miss Belle's not over fain to walk."

"You want me, though, to work it?" said Aunt Hagley, coming to business.

"Yes; give me something as'll take it off, aunt. See, I've brought you Miss Belle's hair, and some of that Rose's, and there are nails of both of 'em, and the major's too. I tell you I was clever to get all these, and it's cost me a deal of trouble. But I did it. I don't like to see right wronged, and I did it."

"I'll see to it," said Aunt Hagley gravely. "I dare say you've brought enow. I'll work the spell and then I'll let you know."

On which, with a pack of greasy cards, some spirits of wine, a handful of salt, a pinch of benzoin, and another of lycopodium, the White Witch went through a series of mutterings and strange gestures; all of which Mary watched with a steady pulse, though expecting to see in bodily shape one of those great spirits who were, she believed, about her aunt at this moment, doing her service and imparting to her knowledge.

After awhile Aunt Hagley lifted up her head from the saucepan which, alternately with the cards, she had been peering into, and sighed deeply, wiping her face wearily, as she sank back in her high chair, as one exhausted.

"It has been a sore time, Mary," she said; "but I've got the word and the sign at last. Rose Kencaly: there it was written fair enough; she it is as has laid the spell on the major, and you, my girl, can take it off. What would Miss Belle give you, Mary, if you could get her the major?" she asked, suddenly.

"Give! she'd give her ears," said Mary.

"I don't see as how you could do much with them," Aunt Hagley replied gravely. "To put 'em into a stocking would scarcely grow guineas, my girl! No; I mean what would she give in money? hard money—money down, Mary?"

"Lord, aunt, I don't know," said Mary, shocked. It was one thing to do good for loyalty and love, and another to work evil for money. But Aunt Hagley had long ago reduced all life to the filling of her money-stocking, and the only thing she despised in her niece was the indifference she showed, as yet, to money. But she would improve, she used to say to herself; she had good blood, and she would improve.

"It can't be done for nothing, Mary," she said gravely. "If Miss Belle will make it worth my while and yours—and yours too, my girl; I'm not selfish, and I will work for you as well as myself—but if she'll do well by us I'll do well by her; and Miss Rose shall trouble her no more. I'll take the spell off, no fear, but it's worth money, Mary; why, it's worth hundreds of pounds to her, and you'll be a fool not to make a good bargain for yourself now you've got the power."

"I can't ask for money, aunt, for what I do for right's sake," said Mary sullenly.

Her aunt had been all this time putting some powder into a packet.

"All right, my girl; then you'll not have the spell, and Miss Rose will have the major," and she put back on the shelf the small locked box from which she had taken the powder.

As usual, that stronger will had its way, and the weaker yielded. After a faint

resistance, it ended by Mary putting on her bonnet again, and carefully placing in her purse a small packet of white powder, which Miss Belle was to put into Miss Rose's coffee—nothing but coffee would do, said Aunt Hagley—when Miss Rose would suffer as she ought, perhaps fly up the chimney as a bat, or they would see the devil run out of her mouth as an eft or a toad, or something such like would happen to her, and the major would be restored to his senses. And then, being in a good humour—for Mary had promised to ask for handsome gains, and to give her half—Aunt Hagley, without putting on her bonnet, took the road with her niece, laughing a little grimly as she said, "You see, my dear, *I* ain't no reason to be afraid. I shan't meet much that's uglier than myself."

Would Miss Belle do it? That was now Mary's difficulty. "You see gentlefolks are not like us," she argued. "They won't believe, and they say they know; but it's we as knows, not they. Would Miss Belle believe if I stood her out till Doomsday, and told her what aunt had said? Not a bit of it. But how could aunt have known that I was coming, or about the major and that Rose, unless They had told her? And as for this spell that is to break a spell, would Miss Belle do it, however much she was told?" However, it had to be tried. There was too much at stake for her not to venture.

Mary approached the subject cautiously. Miss Belle was not one who ever made free with servants, and even Mary, who had been with her for years, had to be careful. She was prepared to be laughed at, of course, and Belle did laugh at her, and she let her. She wouldn't join in the laughter, for They were about her, and They knew that she knew them; but Miss Belle was different. And after she had let her laugh she brought her round, bit by bit, to consent to work her charm.

"You see, miss, if there's nothing in it, it can't do no harm; but if there is, as aunt says, Lord, miss! wouldn't it be fun to see a toad run out of Miss Rose's mouth, or a hump grow on her back before your eyes, and she stand there, just a witch, and all the world to see it? If the major is bewitched, why miss, as an old friend and neighbour, you ought to help him to his senses again. It isn't likely that aunt and so many of us think things as isn't. We know it can be done, and we know it can be taken off again. And there's no one like Aunt Hagley for taking off."

All this Mary said in a headlong, dashing, earnest way, while dressing Miss Loder's hair for dinner, the day after her evening expedition to Combe Andrew.

"Very well, you silly girl, I will do it to satisfy you, and show you how absurd you are in your superstitions. I will give Miss Kencaly the charm as you call it, and you will see nothing will come of it. There, give it to me. What is it?"

"This in coffee, miss," half whispered Mary. "Only in coffee, miss; else the charm won't work!"

Belle was sitting before the glass, and the eyes of mistress and maid met in the mirror. The one was flushed, eager, coarse in her zeal, but honest and single-hearted; the other pale, languid, reticent, seeing farther and thinking deeper, and accepting the responsibility of a possible evil, as far as the poles removed from the intentions of the simpler sinner. The one meant an honest counter-charm — witchcraft foiled with its own weapons; the other meant—what? She took the packet and laughed.

"The idea of witchcraft in these days! How absurd!" she said.

"Try it, miss, and then maybe you'll not say that!" said Mary earnestly; and in her endeavour to persuade her to the trial, she forgot all about the bargain she was to have made, and the sum she was to have demanded.

Dinner was over, and the coffee was brought up. All during the meal Belle Loder had been supremely sweet and friendly with both the major and little Rose. The major, whose conscience had its sore points, was quite grateful to her; and Belle thought in her own mind, and wondered if—Rose being out of the way—well, if——

Coffee was handed round.

"Shall I make yours, dear?" said Belle graciously to Rose; and as she ladled out the crushed candy something more than crushed candy fell from her dainty fingers.

"Oh, thank you!" said little Rose, flushing, in her turn pleased and grateful, too, at this thawing of the Loder ice.

She took the cup and laughed pleasantly; and Belle looked at her sleepily through her half-closed lids. Out in the garden, peering from under the blind, another pair of eyes watched her curiously. They were those of the White Witch come to witness the result of her charm; and to claim its price. Not a leaf stirred, not a creature cried; Rose raised the cup to her lips.

"Rosy, give me a footstool, my dear," said Mrs. Rawdon, lazily.

And Rose set down her cup untasted, and took her aunt the hassock. Then she sat down on the sofa, and, nestling close to her, talked in a low voice, forgetting her coffee.

"The fool, why don't she take it!" muttered the woman watching her. "Who ever saw the like of such foolishness—to have it and not to take it!"

The major was at the piano, turning over some songs.

"Belle, do you sing this?" he asked. And Belle, putting down her cup untasted, as Rose had done, went over to him, and discussed the music. Then they both came back to the table.

"Why, your coffee must be cold," said the major; and he looked into Belle's face, smiling that ineffable smile of his that had more witchcraft in it than all Dame Hagley knew. Belle looked back at him, with her large eyes fully opened; and by that look lost the thread. He had the cups in his hands, unsuspicious, unconscious; and he gave one to each girl. At that moment the dog made a bound through the window, growling savagely, and the woman who had kept the thread slunk away among the bushes.

The next morning a great terror fell on the house: Miss Belle Loder was found stiff and stark in her room. She went to bed with the rest apparently in good health, but she must have died about midnight, said the medical men who made the post-mortem examination: three hours after the butler had taken away the empty coffee-cups. Yet, though she had died with all the symptoms of blood poisoning, no trace of poison could be found by any test known to the experts. It was a mystery, they all said, and a mystery it remained. Wherefore, "Died by the visitation of God," said the jury. "Died because you didn't work the spell as it should be worked, and get the money They had bespoke," said Dame Hagley fiercely to her niece. And "Poisoned herself for love and disappointment," went the verdict of the world, repeated by the major's uneasy conscience; but no one added, "Fallen into the pit digged for another;" while only Mary Bernal suspected, and only Dame Hagley knew.

Whatever the dame knew, it did not trouble her long; for not more than a week after Miss Loder was buried, a man going to the hovel in Combe Andrew found Dame Hagley and her miserable home a mere heap of blackened ashes. She had been burned to death in a drunken sleep, with none to give her aid or warning, none even to know of her danger or to pity her destruction. The ruined hut was never touched. No one owned the place, and not even the poorest squatter cared to build on so unlikely and evilly renowned a spot: so no one dug deep enough among the charred ashes to find the mass of gold which the White Witch had hidden away in her stocking, and which she kept buried under the floor of her hut. And there it is still for any brave adventurer who cares to seek it.

BAFFLED.

I will plant a tree for myself, she said,
With clusters of crimson bloom,
Whose beauty shall dazzle the waking sight,
Whose scent shall fill all the dreamy night
With the breath of its sweet perfume.
But the blight fell down with the morning dew,
And the rose-tree died ere its first bud blew.

I will twine a wreath for myself, she said,
Of myrtle, and laurel, and bay,
Whose glory shall halo my living head,
And over the grave where they lay me dead,
Speak of me and my fame alway.
But the canker was deep, and the thorn was keen,
And the bright leaves withered her clasp between.

I will carve my dream for myself, she said,
Its loveliness fixed for ever,
A thing of beauty and joy and life;
We will pass serene through the world's hot strife,
I and my work together.
But death's strong hand struck sudden and cold,
The chisel dropped from her fainting hold.

They tossed them aside in a useless heap,
Dead root and blossoms, and half-wrought stone,
Where the river of time flowed swift and deep,
And they left not a trace thereon!

THE BLUEBOTTLE FLY.

A French Art-Student's Story.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

The change of position, the slight excitement of the adventure, had aroused me from my torpor, and all my spirit was renewed in the interest furnished by the accident. I hoped to find amusement in the recital of the circumstances by my fellow-traveller. But I soon found that I must resign all hope of conversation with him. He was bent on silence, and answered all my eager questioning in short and almost sulky monosyllables.

"How did the disaster happen?"

"Thrown into a ditch."

"What caused it?"

"A cursed fly!"

"The horse stung?"

"Kicked and reared like the devil!"

"Were you ever on this road before?"

"No!"

"Shall you go back to Paris this same way?"

"He must surely have been drinking," thought I, for he answered this question not in words but with a short hysterical laugh, and a shiver which ran through his whole frame; then after staring at me for a moment he sank back heavily, and closed his eyes, evidently wishing to be troubled with no more questions. He was scarcely older than myself. A mere youth in years, and yet the lines about his face and the furrows on his forehead told of dissipation and late hours, and the indulgence of evil passions, while his long damp hair, falling in heavy masses around his face, cast a grey shadow over his brow, which made it look more pallid still. There was great interest to me in this young and careworn face. "What a fit companion, or rather contrast, would he make to my poitrinaire!" thought I. "Both are dying of consumption, but while the girl is fading sweetly and tenderly like a withered flower, the boy is mouldering away with the corruption of the grave already full upon him."

Silent and motionless as he reclined, he was evidently under the influence of some strong emotion. His arms were crossed upon his breast, but I perceived that his fingers had clutched the folds of his coat with such nervous grip that the cloth was indented with the pressure of his nails. Sometimes he would open his eyes as if by stealth, and on finding my own gaze riveted on him would close them again hastily, as if afraid of being led into conversation, or of having to bear more questioning on my part. Sometimes again he would turn restlessly on his seat, and then I observed that his eyelids would quiver for a moment, and their long auburn lashes become moistened as if with tears. There was a singular fascination in the whole aspect of the young man. I could not resist the temptation to watch him with the greatest interest. Unlike his companion, he was evidently a gentleman, his countenance was delicate and aristocratic in the extreme, his hands soft and white as those of a woman.

As I watched my companion, my attention was suddenly drawn to what at first appeared a large black spot upon the snowy bosom of his shirt. I stared at it in a kind of dreamy amazement, born of the petit bleu administered by Père Ajax, then began to wonder what on earth it could possibly be, and last of all to marvel, always dreamily, and staringly, and stupidly, why I had not perceived it before. There seemed a magic fascination in this same black spot, for I could not withdraw my gaze from the one peculiar plait in the shirt where it lay; and I was just closing my eyes in a sort of drowsy fatigue, when I started convulsively, for the black spot suddenly began to move, and crawling lazily along the embroidery was slowly progressing upwards. It was nothing but a large bluebottle fly, one of the heavy, swollen, unwieldy kind belonging to the butchers' shambles; so dreaded of drovers and agriculturists; so hated in the markets; so nauseous and detestable, that a cruel superstition is attached to the influence of its approach, for it is believed by the people to possess the keen instinct of the vulture and the wolf, in the track of blood, and to follow with the same tenacity the scent of approaching death. Whence the creature came or how it alighted there I could not tell, but there it was, wending its way slowly and heavily upwards towards the young man's face! My whole attention became absorbed in its movements. The mouth of the sleeper was still open, his breathing still short and laboured. Will the foul insect ascend to his lips? Yes, there it is crawling along the sharp edge of the embroidery! No, with a sudden leap and a short and angry buzz it has descended again, and creeps along the heavy gold chain which crosses the waistcoat, balancing its bloated carcass with its slightly extended wings as neatly as any rope-dancer with his balance-pole! Anon, the creature with a sudden spring and with a burst of sound so loud as to seem perfectly inconsistent with its size, has reached the collar. The young man is still heedless, his eyes are still closed, and his mouth still open, for his jaw has gradually drooped, and bestows a yet more ghastly expression on his countenance. The puny insect, now grown a monster in my sight, is actually creating such a painful apprehension in my mind that I can no longer sit still.

The short dry breath, issuing with painful effort from the slumberer's lips, agitates the wings, and yet the creature moves not, neither does the youth arouse himself, or brush the noxious visitor away. There is no one gifted with the artist's temperament, the irritable nerves, the vivid imagination, who will not understand the excitement under which I laboured, as I beheld the gradual progress of the enemy towards the open mouth of the seemingly inanimate figure before me. Slowly, slowly, dragging its slimy weight along, over the damp meshes of his hair, did it finally stand fixed upon the blonde moustache, and, as it remained there motionless, my

whole frame shook with the nervous terror which seized upon me lest—— But no, the idea was too horrible; and yet imagination would revert to the old German legend of the Linden Tree, and as I stared at the creature standing there, my lips moved as I murmured forth the lines that had made such impression on me when a boy. I had not remembered them for years, but suddenly they rushed to my memory, as though I had but just that moment heard them crooned forth, as in days of old, by the old German Frau who had nursed me in my childhood:

> And the knight lay under the linden-tree,
> Despite of his wound still fair to see.
> But a great black-beetle sate on his chin,
> Watching his mouth that he might crawl in!
> Tranquil and mute like the beggar that waits
> For his dole of bread at the convent gates;
> Counting the minutes, and cursing the time
> (For the wicket is closed until noonday chime);
> Thus the beetle abides on the dead man's chin,
> Till his jaw shall drop, and then he'll crawl in!

And then as I closed my eyelids tight, and pressed my hands one over the other in such violent grasp that my nails almost entered the flesh, this horrid image likewise died away, and another one, still more horrible, arose in its stead, and I beheld the guillotine at the Barrière du Trône, as described by Samson, and the hideous wicker-basket into which the heads were falling. "And as each head rolled into the bloody mass, there arose a cloud of flies from the sawdust, which caused a shout of laughter amongst the populace. Whilst the cry of 'Catch 'em, Samson! catch 'em, Samson!' issued in mockery from the troop of boys who had climbed the lamp-posts of the Octroi, for they were all nobles on that day, who had taken care to have their heads all dressed with powder and pomatum before leaving the prison, as they wished to make a decent appearance before the canaille, and it was the perfume of the maréchal powder and the scented essence of jessamine which had attracted this unusual number of flies round the basket." Then again arose before my mental vision the head of Berthier, carried aloft on a pike through the streets of Paris, "and followed by such a swarm of flies that the bearer was compelled to agitate the pike to and fro every now and then in order that the hair worn in long pigtail and ailes de pigeon, according to the fashion of the court, by whisking suddenly round, might brush the buzzing multitude away, and disperse the nuisance, which, as the day advanced, grew more and more troublesome." I had just been reading Prudhomme's Journal, and his account of the horrid scene was still fresh in my recollection.

As I retraced every detail of the piteous story, and thought over the very words in which the historian had related it, the excitement with which I watched the nauseous insect before me had gradually grown greater until I had unconsciously bent forward by degrees, and my face had come almost into contact with that of the stranger. The agitation of my nerves had now increased to such an extent that at last I felt quite ashamed of my own want of self-control, and passing my hand through my hair, inquired if this really could be myself, who was thus abiding, perplexed and amazed, before the movements of a miserable insect whose very existence I could obliterate by the slightest flip of my finger. By Heavens! now that I thought of it, the temptation was not to be resisted! I folded my hand in the fashion I had learned at school, and perfected by long practice at the studio, resolving to annihilate the creature at once, and, moreover, to accomplish the feat so lightly and so steadily, that if the stranger were really asleep he should not even be awakened from his slumber, just as we used to do to old Rabâche, when in summer the flies settled on his bald head, where they had been invited to assemble by the powdered sugar artistically dropped thereon while he was bending over our performances, and training our crooked lines in the way they should go.

But just at that very moment the creature before me began once more to crawl. The pursuit assumed to my excited fancy the proportions of a chase, and we all know how utterly beyond control are the feelings on such an occasion. Unable to restrain my eagerness, instead of proceeding softly as I had intended, I dashed forward in the most awkward and uncouth manner possible, losing my balance in the frenzy of the moment, and fell upon the young man's bosom with a shock that made the tin case slung across my chest rattle with a startling sound, and the long bag of green baize fall from the outside passenger's knees against the swing-board; its contents, whatever they were, rattling and jingling with a sharp and irritating sound, exactly like that produced by my tin case. The youth started, and the colour came faintly into his cheek, while I stammered forth the most earnest excuses for my awkwardness. But even this shock, rude as it was, did not seem to arouse the young man from his listless attitude. He stretched out his

limbs and yawned. He was very pale, and the dark rings around his eyes seemed somehow to have grown darker than before. The nervous twitching of his fingers and the quivering motion of his eyelids were renewed, and I could not be mistaken when I fancied that his grim friend on the swing-board looked anxiously towards him once or twice, as he made a sign towards the end of the road where the Three Acacias were now visible, tossing their feathery arms to the sky, and seeming to throw light as well as shadow on the space where they stood.

For me, however, all interest was absorbed in my search after the bluebottle fly. It was nowhere to be seen. It had disappeared, scared away, no doubt, by the noise. "It must have flown through the window of the coucou," thought I. And I cannot tell what a relief it was to my heated imagination to find that the creature was gone.

It was not till this conviction had been fully impressed upon me that I turned again to the young man to offer my timid excuses for the apparent rudeness of which I had been guilty. I told him the cause of my brusque attack, and apologised in the choicest terms I could command for the shock I must have occasioned to his nerves. But the youth was evidently too much preoccupied, or too indifferent at that moment to take offence. He turned a dull heavy gaze upon me, and said:

"Ah, yes! Well I don't wonder—that cursed bluebottle fly! I thought I saw the coachman crush it with the butt-end of his whip! Already did Bras-de-Fer," and he pointed with his thumb to the man with the green-baize bag sitting on the swing-board, "declare it must have been the devil himself to have pursued us all the way from Paris only to get us kicked into the ditch. The devil, you know, whose memoirs were written by Eugène Sue. Don't you remember? In the diligence, where the abbé tries in vain to divert his thoughts from the lady at his side, and is prevented from perusing his breviary by the persecutions of a bluebottle fly, every time he tries to fix his attention on his prayers? Bras-de-Fer never meant to compare my innocence with that of the abbé, you know; quite the reverse. He said that the devil would never have needed to disguise himself for my temptation, if a pretty girl had sat beside me!" And he uttered a weak tuneless titter, the very senility of vice before even its powers were developed.

The foolish laughter without mirth grated on my taste, and I answered sharply that never having read Eugène Sue's novel (which I really had not at that time) I could not judge of the comparison; but that my abhorrence of the horrible insect arose from the superstition of its being gifted with the power of scenting blood, and that its presence conveyed a warning of death or dire misfortune to those honoured by its visit. "But of course *you* are no believer in such things," added I, on observing the start with which the youth had listened to the words.

"Perhaps not—perhaps not," he gasped forth, turning deadly pale and clutching me by the arm with a force of which I should scarcely have deemed him capable, judging by his languid movements and apparently feminine weakness. And then before I had recovered from the astonishment into which his sudden action had thrown me, he had withdrawn his grasp, exclaiming in a tone of childish triumph, "And look you, my friend, if there be aught of truth in the belief, I shall not be alone to suffer, for see, you too must be destined to share in the misfortune."

With a hoarse mocking laugh he flung himself back into his seat, pointing to my shoulder, where my eyes, following his gesture, beheld with horror the loathsome insect which had occasioned all this turmoil actually standing there, seeming to mock me with its cool impudence, and its unconsciousness of all the repulsion with which I gazed upon it. I started up in dismay and shook myself with violence, brushing down the sleeve of my blouse with many an exclamation of disgust. As my rough motion dislodged it, I could distinctly hear its shrill trumpet and the droning buzz which followed, even above the clatter of the horse's hoofs and the creaking of the coucou. The youth laughed aloud with a kind of fiendish delight at the excitement I displayed, then resumed his listless look, and spoke no more. Once he raised the striped curtain at his back and gazed out towards the Three Acacias, then dropping it, suddenly turned away, as a slight colour overspread his cheek and brow, dispelling for a moment its death-like pallor. Was it the excitement of pleasure or of pain? The anticipation of meeting with his riotous companions, or annoyance at being compelled to exertion while still overcome with the fatigue and languor, which I felt sure were the consequence of the orgies of the previous night?

But I did not pause long in further contemplation of my fellow-traveller. To re-

main thus, confined within that narrow space, with the idea of the continued presence of the hateful fly, was impossible. I beheld it everywhere. I followed the trail of the obnoxions creature amid the tracery of the pattern of the oil-skin lining, detecting its hated presence amongst the folds of the striped curtains, discovering its hideous form in every little shadow, starting with nausea whenever the breeze uplifted the calico, and shuddering with disgust at the rustling sound it made. My brain got distracted and my ears filled with its imaginary hum, until at last, unable to collect my thoughts amid this torture of the nerves created by my fancy, I called aloud to Tony to stop the vehicle, and without a word of courtesy to my fellow-traveller, I jumped to the ground without so much as alighting on the iron step, and plunged blindly into the wooded dell that bordered the alley, up which we were driving to the rising ground, where stood the Three Acacias.

BOLD ROBIN HOOD.

During a period reaching nearly four hundred years back, the press has put forth many ballads, tales, narratives, and other compositions relating to that redoubtable but mysterious personage, Robin Hood. It was not very long after the introduction of printing into England that Wynkyn de Worde, about three hundred and eighty years ago, printed the Lytel Geste of Robyn Hode—the forerunner of a long series, varying in importance from single broadsheets to goodly volumes. But the manuscripts are of much earlier date. The earliest mention of these ballads, in any work at present known to exist, is in Robert Longlande's Vision of Piers Plowman, written in the reign of Edward the Third. Piers states very frankly, that although he is not quite perfect in the Paternoster or Lord's Prayer, he knows the song of Robyn Hode. The Lytel Geste, above mentioned, seems to have been a stringing together of songs and tales long current among the people, some written down, some merely repeated from mouth to mouth. Four hundred and sixty stanzas are devoted to a narration of the daring, odd, shrewdly-devised achievements of Robin, so linked as to furnish a kind of metrical biography. Additions were made during the Tudor times; and it is known that a pastoral comedy called Robin Hood was played in London towards the close of Elizabeth's reign. During nearly the whole of the next century, in the reigns of the two Jameses and the two Charleses, ballads of Robin Hood, mostly printed in black letter, were hawked about the villages, and sung in a kind of recitative. A collection of these was gradually made, and published under the title of Robin Hood's Garland; numerous editions were afterwards printed, introduced by what professed to be the life of the hero. With the Geste and the Garland together, and other ballads and stories from time to time ferreted out by Ritson, Hunter, Stukely, Cunningham, Planché, Gutch, Chappell, and other investigators, the Robin Hood literature has became somewhat considerable.

What, then, are these ballads and tales? What do they tell us? The central figure of the whole of them is a bold outlaw, an expert bowman, who is virtually lord of Sherwood Forest, and the terror of nobles, magistrates, and priests; but he is kind to the poor, and a respecter of women. The foresters and villagers would rather shield him from the authorities, than aid in capturing him. He gradually surrounds himself with a body of companions, among whom are Little John, Will Scarlet, Friar Tuck, Will Stukely, Arthur-a-Bland, George-a-Green, and a fair damsel named Maid Marian; and one or other of these is generally associated with him in the exploits to which the ballads relate.

Robin Hood and Little John, we are told in one ballad, first encountered each other in this fashion. Robin, a young outlaw of some twenty summers, was roaming the forest one day, when he met John Little, a strapping fellow seven feet high; they met while crossing a wooden plank over a stream; neither would give way; so they fought with quarter-staves till John fairly knocked over Robin into the stream. The outlaw admired the pluck of his conqueror; and the two henceforth became fast friends. Will Scarlet was added to the band by some equally unexpected adventure; and one of the ballads tells how Robin won the heart of Will Stukely by rescuing him from a sheriff's officer. As to Friar Tuck, he is certainly one of the most remarkable members of the community. We are told all about him in a ballad of forty-one verses (they were not frightened at the length of their songs in those days):

> In the summer time, when leaves grow green,
> And flowers are fresh and gay,
> Robin Hood and his merry men
> Were all disposed to play.

They had a friendly bout at archery, and

made some good shots; whereupon Will Scarlet declared that he knew a curtell friar who could beat any of them. What this word curtell meant is not now quite certain. Some suppose it to have referred to a cordelier or corded friar, in allusion to the cord or rope worn round the waist by Franciscans, wherewith to flagellate themselves; whereas others suggest that it refers to a friar who wore a curtailed or short tunic. Be this as it may, Robin set forth to seek this curtell friar, who was known as Friar Tuck of Fountains Abbey. They met, and the contest between them was of so marvellous a kind that one might wonder how the ballad ever obtained credence, were it not that the appetite for the marvellous is known to have been singularly keen in those days. Suffice it to say that the strength, skill, and boldness of the friar quite charmed Robin, who induced him to become a member of the forest band. Another, Allen-a-Dale, was won over by a kindness rendered to him on an occasion of doleful sensitiveness. One day,

> Robin Hood in the forest stood,
> All under the greenwood tree,

when he saw a gaily-attired young man pass by, singing right merrily. On the following day he again saw him, but depressed with woe. Robin accosted him, and asked the meaning of the change. The youth stated that on the previous day he was going to be wedded to his betrothed, but found that her cruel father was forcing her to marry a rich old baron. Robin started forth for the church, and got there just in the nick of time. He ascertained that the youth and the maiden loved each other, whereupon he blew his horn, and his merry men (who always seem to have been close at hand whenever he wanted them) came into the church, and compelled the priest to marry the maiden to Allen-a-Dale.

Robin was evidently fond of fighting, for he liked the men who thrashed him as well as those who were thrashed by him. Arthur-a-Bland, the tanner, furnished a case in point. A rattling ballad tells us that

> In Nottingham there lives a jolly tanner,
> With a hey, down, down, and a down!
> His name is Arthur-a-Bland;
> There is ne'er a squire in Nottinghamshire
> Dare bid bold Arthur stand.

It chanced that Robin and Arthur met in the forest; a small incitement was sufficient to bring on a contest, in which Arthur was the victor. It then transpired that he was a kinsman of Little John; he joined the band, and Robin, John, and Arthur danced the Three Merry Men's Dance.

As to Maid Marian, she seems to have fallen in love with the hero while yet unknown to him, and to have adopted a mode of revealing her attachment quite orthodox in romance and poetry:

> A bonny fair maid of a noble degree,
> With a hey, down, down a down down,
> Maid Marian called by name,
> Lived in the north, of excellent worth,
> For she was a gallant dame.

She went to Sherwood in male attire, met Robin, contrived to fight and to be worsted, to yield and to confess, and she became, we will suppose, Mrs. Robin Hood.

One of the ballads relates to Little John and the Four Beggars, showing how he pretended on one occasion to go begging, and met with four hale beggars, who professed to be dumb, deaf, blind, and crippled respectively; how he exposed them, and punished them for their deceit by robbing them of three hundred pounds. Another, a ballad of fifty-eight verses, narrates how Robin Hood, Little John, and Will Scarlet won a victory over the Prince of Aragon and two giants, and how the contest ended by Will marrying a princess who had been rescued from peril. In Robin Hood and the Shepherd, told in twenty-seven verses, a shepherd gets the better both of Robin and of John in turn, and is consequently held in high esteem by Robin. In Robin Hood's Golden Prize we learn in what fashion he robbed two priests of five hundred pounds. Priests and bishops he seems always to have regarded as fair prey. Witness Robin Hood and the Bishop:

> Come, gentlemen all, and listen awhile,
> With a hey down, down, and a down;
> And a story to you I'll unfold.
> I'll tell you how Robin Hood served the bishop,
> When he robbed him of all his gold.

He got him into the forest by a ruse, tied him to a tree, emptied his pouch, and then made him sing a mass. In Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford, another ballad, the bishop is made to dance in his boots after being despoiled. Robin Hood and the Butcher tells us of an odd prank, in which the hero went to Nottingham, pretended to be a butcher in the market-place, and created quite a ferment among the fraternity:

> But when he sold his meat so fast,
> No butcher by him could thrive;
> For he sold more meat for a peny,
> Than others could do for five!

In Robin Hood and the Jolly Tinker, we have one of the many instances in which a good fight leads to fast friendship. A certain tinker was armed with a warrant to capture Robin, who was not aware of this fact at the first encounter:

And as he came to Nottingham,
A tinker he did meet,
And seeing him a lusty blade,
He kindly did him greet.

When Robin found on what errand the tinker was engaged, they settled the matter with the quarter-staff; the result was, as usual, an addition to the members of the band. The Pindar, or pound-keeper, of Wakefield was another hero:

"In Wakefield their lives a jolly pindar,
In Wakefield all on the green,
There is neither knight nor squire," said the pindar,
"Nor baron so bold, nor baron so bold,
Dare make a trespass in the town of Wakefield,
But his pledge goes to the penfold."

Robin Hood, Little John, and Will Scarlet, in some way contravened this rule; whereupon the pindar boldly grappled with all three:

He lean'd his back fast unto a tree,
And his foot against a thorn,
And there he fought a long summer day,
And a summer's day so long,
Till their swords in their broad bucklers
Were broken close to their hands.

Robin so admired the pindar, that he induced him to join the band. One of the ballads declares that Robin Hood slew in an encounter fifteen men who had doubted his courage; and this, too, when he was only as many years old. It opens thus:

Robin Hood was a tall young man,
Of fifteen winters old,
Derry ding dong!
And Robin Hood was a proper young man,
Of courage stout and bold,
Hey derry ding dong!

On one occasion he met a lady weeping. On inquiring into the cause, he found that three of her sons were to be executed at Nottingham for killing the king's deer. This was quite enough for him; he resolved to effect a rescue. Proceeding to the city he sought an interview with the sheriff, professed to be earnest in the king's cause, and asked to be permitted to fill the office of hangman, with the only further privilege of being allowed to make one blast on his horn. The sheriff assented, the arrangements were made, Robin blew his horn, whereupon a hundred and ten of his merry men suddenly appeared. The sheriff, thus knowing who was his formidable visitor, speedily consented to let the three prisoners escape:

"Oh take them, oh take them," says great master sheriff,
"Oh take them along with thee;
For there's ne'er a man in all Nottingham,
Can do the like of thee!"

It is noteworthy that Robin, in the midst of his wild achievements, was credited with a reverence for the religious services of the church. That this reverence did not extend to the ecclesiastics is clear enough; his exploits show this, as does a couplet in one of the ballads:

Theyse byshoppes and theyse archebyshoppes,
Ye shall them bete and bynde!

Nevertheless, in his own queer way he had a kind of piety. A very ancient ballad contains four stanzas which notice this characteristic in a curious way:

"This is a mery mornynge," said litulle Johne,
"Be hym that dyed on tre,
A more merry man than I am one
Lives not in Christiante."

"Pluck up thy hert, my dere mayster,'
Litulle Johne gan say,
"And think it is a ful fayre time,
In a mornynge of May."

"Ze on thynge greves me," seid Robyne
"And does my hert mych woo,
That I may not so solemn day
To mas nor matyns goo.

"Hit is a fourtnet and more," said hee,
"Syn I my Sauvour see;
To-day will I to Notynghem,
With the myght of mylde Marye."

He went, but the seriousness of his errand did not prevent him from playing one of his pranks in the city.

Among the persons with whom Robin, or some of his men, came in contact in various adventures, were the Abbot of St. Mary, the Potter, the Beggar, the Stranger, the Ranger, Sir Richard, and the King, all forming the subjects of distinct ballads. The king, we are told, was the means of bringing the outlaw back to a more regular course of life. Going to Sherwood Forest, with a view of seeing this redoubtable Robin Hood, and accompanied by a force sufficient to insure a capture, the king graciously offered pardon on conditions which Robin accepted. More than one of the ballads tell of the hero's death. He fell sick, and went to a religious house in Yorkshire, the abbess of which was a kinswoman of his. She bled him, and allowed him to bleed to a fatal degree—treacherously, as the songs assert. He longed to see the greenwood once again, and shoot one more arrow before he died. A paraphrase on the old rhymes has been prettily rendered by Bernard Barton:

They rais'd him on his couch, and set
The casement open wide;
Once more, with vain and fond regret,
Fair Nature's face he eyed.

With kindling glance and throbbing heart,
One parting look he cast,
Sped on its way the feather'd dart,
Sank back, and breath'd his last.

And where it fell they dug his grave,
Beneath the greenwood tree:
Meet resting-place for one so brave,
So lawless, frank, and free!

In reference to the music to which these

singularly interesting old ballads were set, Mr. Chappell, the experienced author of the volumes on the Popular Music of the Olden Time, finds that it was very plain and simple, easy to sing—a necessary condition in such very lengthy compositions. Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford was in two-four time; Robin Hood and the Friar in six-eight time, and in the minor mode; and so was Robin Hood and the Pindar of Wakefield. On examining many of the ballads, in the second line of which there comes a "hey down-a-down down," or something of the kind, Mr. Chappell finds that they were all, or nearly all, set to the same tune. This was the case with Robin Hood and the Stranger, Robin Hood and the Beggar, Robin Hood and the Four Beggars, Robin Hood and the Bishop, Robin Hood's Chase, Robin Hood and the Tanner, Robin Hood and the Butcher, Robin Hood and the Ranger, and Robin Hood and Maid Marian. In many of the ballads the last line is repeated as a chorus.

And now, what are we to think of all this? Did Robin Hood ever really live? Was he a reality, or only a myth? There are writers who refuse to give credence to his actual existence. It has been urged, by one or other of these critics, that the origin of the ballads may be accounted for on other grounds. It has been urged that Robin Hood was not a patronymic, but a purely descriptive name, applied to the ideal personification of a class—the outlaws of the olden time. Robin's fame extended to Scotland and France as well as throughout England. Eugène Sue, in one of his novels, gives the name of Robin de Bois to a mysterious character employed by French mothers to frighten their children. Grimm, in his German mythology, speaks of the hood or hoodiken assigned in fairy tales to Robin Goodfellow and other elves; and it is inferred that Robin Hood may be simply Robin o' the Hood, not a veritable man, but a mischievous denizen of fairyland. Some settle down into the prosaic explanation that, as there were in the Middle Ages many Englishmen with the surname of Hood, and many with the Christian name of Robin, the chances are in favour of there having been some one man with both names; but that this need not involve a belief in the stories and ballads as being true narratives. A Gloucestershire writer states that, in that county, the peasants often pronounce W like H, converting Wood into Hood, and Robin's Wood Hill into Robin Hood's Hill. Hallam says that, in the Provençal pastoral poems of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Robin Hood and Maid Marian often appear as the names of a shepherd and his rustic lover.

There is, however, a greater concurrence of testimony to support a belief that a man named Robin Hood really lived some six centuries ago, and really disported himself as an outlaw in Sherwood Forest. The Reverend Joseph Hunter has found, in a household book of the court of Edward the Second, an entry to the effect that one Robyn Hode was among the vadlets, valets, varlets, or porters of the chamber in the king's palace. This is regarded as giving some support to the account which forms the burden of many of the tales and ballads, and which may be thus summarised: That Robin Hood was born at Locksley in the time of Henry the Second; that his real name was Robert Fitzoothes, some say Earl of Huntingdon; that he was a wild extravagant youth, who got into debt and difficulties; that he became an outlaw in Sherwood Forest, where he surrounded himself with the companions already named; that he enlisted all he could of those who were brave and bold, and good archers; that he and his bowmen, something like a hundred in number, made war against every one except the poor and the weak, and moved about from place to place when attacked; that the forest supplied them with venison and firewood, while the villagers were made to furnish other necessaries and comforts, either by purchase or by more summary means; that the king pardoned Robin, after an interview; that Robin was quietly in the royal service for a considerable time; and that he died at Kirtley Nunnery, Yorkshire, in the reign of Henry the Third. There is, it is true, an awkward chronological hitch here; because if Robin Hood died in the time of Henry the Third, he could not well have been the Robin who lived in the days of Edward the Second. Where the arrow fell resulting from poor Robin's last shot was on a spot not far from Wakefield; and antiquaries agree that some years ago there was really a grave at that spot, with sods beneath the head and feet ends, and a stone bearing the inscription or epitaph:

Here undernead dis laitl stean
Laiz Robert Earl of Huntingdon.
Ne'er arcir vez az hie sa geud,
An pipl kauld im Robyn Heud.
Sich utlawes az hi an iz men
Vil England nivir si agen.

One thing is pretty certain. Neither antiquary or etymologist will ever kill Robin Hood. He will live in popular belief as

he has lived for centuries past, though not perhaps so entirely unquestioned. Shakespeare mentions him in As You Like It, where the duke and his followers live in the Forest of Arden, "like the old Robin Hood of England." Sir Walter Scott, in Ivanhoe, brings in a bold archer, named Locksley the Yeoman, as one of the characters. Richard Cœur de Lion pardons Locksley for some misdeeds, and addresses him:

"And thou, brave Locksley——"

"Call me no longer Locksley, my liege, but know me under the name which, I fear, fame hath blown too widely not to have reached even your royal ears. I am Robin Hood, of Sherwood Forest."

"King of outlaws, prince of good fellows," said Richard, who declared that the name was well known, even as far as Palestine; "be assured, brave outlaw, that no deed done in our absence, and in the turbulent times to which it has given rise, shall be remembered to thy disadvantage."

Meanwhile we have many local names to refresh the memory: such as Robin Hood's Well, near Locksley, or Loxley; the Robin Hood and Little John hostelry at Sheffield; Robin Hood's Spring, Robin Hood's Moss, Robin Hood's Wood, Robin Hood's Bow, at Fountains Abbey; Robin Hood's Cap and Slippers, at St. Anne's Well; Robin Hood's Bay, on the Yorkshire coast; Robin Hood's Hill, in Derbyshire; Robin Hood's Stride, in the same county; and Robin Hood's Wind, in Lancashire—where this name is given to a thaw wind, a wind blowing during the thawing of snow, which Robin is said to have declared was the only wind which he could not withstand.

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER IV. VISITORS.

ALTHOUGH her mind was sufficiently made up as to the course which she would pursue, Madge thought it would be advisable to take counsel with Mr. Drage, and accordingly, early the next morning, she set off for the rectory. She intended to tell Mr. Drage that Philip Vane was coming to Wheatcroft on a matter of business, but did not think it necessary to explain what that business was, nor to acquaint the rector with the information which she had gleaned by unravelling the mysteries of the cipher telegram. It would be sufficient, she thought, to tell Mr. Drage that she intended to keep herself concealed during the time her husband was at Wheatcroft; and, by every means in her power, to prevent him having the slightest idea of her connexion with Sir Geoffry's establishment.

She found the rector taking his morning walk round the garden, with little Bertha trotting by his side. Directly she caught sight of Madge, the child rushed towards her, putting up her face to be kissed, and clinging to Madge's gown with both hands.

"We were talking about you just now, Mrs. Pickering," said the child. "I was asking papa why you did not come back and live here. We should like it so much, pa and I would, and it would be so much more cheerful for you than staying with that cross old gentleman at Wheatcroft."

"My dear Bertha," said Madge, with a grave smile, "I should like to be with you very much, but I cannot come."

"So papa said," cried the child, turning to Mr. Drage, who had just come up. "I suppose as papa cannot have you here, that is the reason he has bought a portrait of you?"

"A portrait of me!" cried Madge, looking towards the rector with uplifted eyebrows.

"Bertha, my darling, how can you be so ridiculous," said the rector. "The fact is, Mrs. Pickering, that when at Bircester the other day, I saw in a shop window a print of a saint's head, by some German artist, and I was so struck with it, that I could not resist purchasing it."

"Yes, and he has had it nailed up over the mantelpiece in his bedroom, Mrs. Pickering; and when I told him the other day that I thought it was like you, his face grew quite red. Didn't it, papa?"

"Now run away, darling, and don't talk nonsense," said the rector, whose cheeks were burning; then as the child darted off, he turned to his visitor and said, "Have you any news, Mrs. Pickering, as you are away from home so early?"

"I have indeed," she replied, "and strange news. Philip Vane is coming to Wheatcroft!"

"Good Heavens!" cried the rector. "That woman has told him of your visit to her."

"Oh, no," said Madge, with a smile, "she has not told him; she will not tell him. She has determined to play the game out in her own way, and to run the risk No, Mr. Vane is coming with another gentleman from London to see Sir Geoffry on business."

The rector gave a sudden start, and a

bright eager look crossed his face, but died away immediately.

"He will be at Wheatcroft, then, some little time?" he said.

"He will pass one night there," replied Madge. "The distance from London is too great for them to return the same day. Besides, they have business to discuss with Sir Geoffry which will probably take some hours."

"What do you intend to do?"

"I intend asking Sir Geoffry's permission to remain in my room. In the ordinary course of events, a person in my position would not be brought into contact with company remaining for so short a period in the house; and it is only through Sir Geoffry's courtesy and consideration that I take a more prominent place in the household. I shall retire to my room when they arrive, and remain there until after their departure. The name of Mrs. Pickering, the housekeeper, will doubtless be mentioned occasionally, but it is one which Mr. Vane has never heard of in connexion with me, and will convey to his mind no idea of me whatsoever. Do you approve of what I propose doing?"

"Perfectly," said Mr. Drage, with a nervous and excited air. "It is most important that your husband should not know of your presence in this place. You feel tolerably certain that Mrs. Bendixen has not acquainted him with your visit?"

"I feel quite certain of it," said Madge. "Her last words to me were convincing on that point."

"Then Mr. Vane will stay over the night at Wheatcroft. Who is the other gentleman who is coming down with him?"

"The chairman of the company of which Mr. Vane is the general manager."

"The chairman! Oh, then it is through him that the business will principally be conducted; and Mr. Vane is probably only coming down to be referred to on points of detail. Is he a man likely to walk out much while he is here?"

"What an extraordinary question!" said Madge. "I can scarcely understand what you mean."

"I meant was he fond of exercise? Some men whose lives are passed in the City are delighted at every chance of getting into the fresh air. However, I only asked for the sake of something to say. I think you are perfectly right in what you propose, my dear Mrs. Pickering, and I would recommend you to take every precaution that your intentions are not frustrated."

He spoke in a nervous, jerky manner, quite foreign to his nature, and half put forth his hand, as though about to wish her good-bye. It was evident that he was anxious for her departure, so Madge, wondering much what could have so strangely moved her friend, took her leave. The rector accompanied her to the gate, and then, returning to his study, turned the key in the lock, and, falling upon his knees, prayed long and fervently.

When Madge arrived at Wheatcroft she found Sir Geoffry in a state of great excitement.

"I have received a letter from these gentlemen, Mrs. Pickering," he said, "and they will be here at mid-day to-morrow. Very luxurious fellows for men of business they seem to be too. Springside is too far distant from London for them to complete the journey in one day; they must sleep at Bircester forsooth. Deuced easy style this Mr. Delabole writes in too; says he has no doubt that, after I have perused the private papers which he intends bringing with him, and listened to all he has to say, I shall be convinced of the excellence of the undertaking, and that he shall carry away the deed duly inscribed with my name. He speaks so confidently that the investment which he proposes must be a very sound one, or else he must have but a poor opinion of my business qualifications. I dare say he thinks it will be easy enough, with specious words and cooked accounts, to get over an old soldier; however, that will remain to be proved. You will be quite ready for the reception of these gentlemen, Mrs. Pickering, and will make them comfortable, I am sure."

"You may depend upon their being made perfectly comfortable, Sir Geoffry," said Madge. "There will, I presume, be no occasion for my being in attendance when they are here?"

"None in the world," said Sir Geoffry, promptly.

"I mean that I shall not be called upon to see them, and that I may keep to my room during their stay?"

"Certainly, if you wish it," said Sir Geoffry. "But you know, Mrs. Pickering, that I am rather proud of you, and——"

"I am a little over-fatigued by my journey, and I dread any introduction to strangers, fearing I might absolutely break down. I——"

"Don't say another word about it; you shall do exactly as you please, and no stress shall be laid upon you. Sensitive woman that," said the old general to himself, looking after Madge's retreating figure, "high-spirited, and all that kind of thing. Does

not mind the people about here, but doesn't like strangers. Is afraid, I suppose, of meeting people who knew her in better days, and who would be ashamed of recognising her in her present position. Now I must once more look through the papers which Irving sent to me, and coach myself up in readiness to meet these gentlemen from the City."

Punctual to its time, the train containing the two gentlemen arrived at the Springside station the following morning, and Mr. Delabole, hopping briskly out, called a fly, then turned back to assist his companion in extricating their luggage from the carriage. There were but few persons on the platform, for it was an early and unfashionable train; but amongst them was a tall, thin man, of stooping figure, dressed in a long clergyman's coat, who hovered round the two strangers, and seemed to take particular notice of them—such particular notice as to attract Mr. Vane's attention, and induce him to inquire jocularly of Mr. Delabole "Who was his friend?" Whereupon Mr. Delabole stared with easy assurance at the tall gentleman, and told Mr. Vane "that their friend was probably a parson who had got wind of the rich marriage Mr. Vane was about to make, and had come there to draw him of a little money for the local charities."

They drove straight to Wheatcroft, and on their arrival were received with much formality and politeness by Sir Geoffry, who told them that luncheon was awaiting them. During the discussion of this meal, at which the three gentlemen alone were present, the conversation was entirely of a social character; Springside, its natural beauties and its mineral waters; the style of persons frequenting it; the differences between a town and country life—were all lightly touched upon. The talk then drifted into a discussion on the speculative mania which had recently laid such hold upon English society, then filtering off into a narrow channel of admiration for Mr. Irving and his Midas-like power, worked back into the broad stream of joint-stock companies and rapid fortune-making, and finally settled down upon the Terra del Fuegos mine. During this conversation, Sir Geoffry had given utterance to various caustic remarks, and what he imagined were unpleasant truths, all of which, though somewhat chafed at by Mr. Vane, were received by Mr. Delabole, who acted as spokesman for himself and his friend, with the greatest suavity, and were replied to with the utmost coolness and good temper. The promptitude which his companion displayed in seizing upon every word uttered by their host as a personal matter was not without its effect upon Mr. Delabole. When Sir Geoffry pushed his chair back from the table and suggested that they should adjourn to the library, there to discuss the object of their visit, Mr. Delabole said:

"If you have no objection, Sir Geoffry, I think that this question will be more likely to be brought to a speedy conclusion if it is left to you and me. My friend Mr. Vane is invaluable in all matters of detail, and when we come to them we can request him to favour us with his presence; for the old saying of two being better company than three holds good in business discussions as well as in social life, and if you have no objection, I think the basis of any arguments which are to be made between our friend Irving, represented by you, and the company represented by me, would better be settled by us alone."

Sir Geoffry bowed stiffly enough. "Whatever Mr. Delabole thought he should be happy to agree to. From the position which Mr. Delabole held in the City, it was quite evident that in such a talk as they proposed to have, he, by himself, would be more than a match for an old retired Indian officer."

Mr. Delabole smiled at this speech. "There was, he hoped, no question of brains or ingenuity in it. If the stability and excellence of the investment did not by themselves persuade Sir Geoffry to advise his friend to embark in it—and he hoped to embark in it a little himself—no blandishments of his should be brought forward to bring about that end. It was simply a question of confidence and figures, not of listening to compliments and blarney. He would willingly retire with the general into the library, while his good friend Mr. Vane would perhaps stroll about the grounds, taking care to be within call if his valuable services were required."

His good friend, Mr. Vane, who during luncheon had been paying particular attention to some old and remarkable Madera which was on the table, did not seem at all to relish this plan. At first, he seemed inclined to make some open remonstrance, but a glance from underneath Mr. Delabole's bushy eyebrows dissuaded him therefrom, and he contented himself by shrugging his shoulders and indulging in other mild signs of dissent and objection. Previously to retiring with Mr. Deabole, Sir Geoffry, with punctilious courtesy, ac-

companied Mr. Vane to the hall-door; pointed out to him where were the pleasantest walks in the grounds, how best to reach the spots from whence the favourite views were to be obtained, and handed him the keys of the conservatory and the gates opening into the home park. Mr. Vane received all this politeness very coolly, inwardly determining to take the first opportunity of revenging himself on Mr. Delabole for the unceremonious treatment received at that gentleman's hands.

Left to himself, Mr. Vane strolled idly about the grounds switching the heads off the flowers with his cane, and cursing Delabole's impudence for having relegated him to the duties of the second fiddle.

"Make the best of your time, my good friend," said he, stretching himself upon a bench shaded by the overhanging branches of a large tree, "make the best of your time, to swagger and give yourself airs, and show that you are the head of the concern; while I am, or am supposed to be, only one of its paid officers; for within a week, or ten days at the outside, I shall be my own master, and if you attempt anything of that kind with me then, I shall be in a position to tell you my opinion of you in the very plainest language. Don't think I have not noticed of late how very tightly you have drawn the rope which binds me to you! Telegraphed for when I am away, told to go here and there, to find out this and that, brought down here and shunted on one side, as though I were a mere clerk, whose business it is to make memoranda of what may pass between their excellencies! Oh, my good friend Delabole, you may take your oath I will not forget this. When once my marriage with Mrs. Bendixen is an accomplished fact, and I have the knowledge that I am beyond any harm which you could do me, then you shall taste the leek which you have compelled me so frequently of late to swallow. I will put my foot on your neck, as you have put yours on mine, I will—— Hallo, who's this coming this way? One of the gardeners, I suppose. No, by Jove! the parson who was at the station, and who seemed to take such interest in us and our movements. What can he want? He must be a friend of Sir Geoffry's, and makes his way through the grounds as a short cut from one part of his parish to the other. He will see I am a friend of the general's, and will want to enter into conversation. I hate parsons, and shan't take any notice of him."

With this amiable resolve, Mr. Vane curled up his feet beneath him on the bench, pulled out a cigar, and was just about to light it, when, glancing up from under the brim of his hat, he saw the clergyman standing beside him.

Philip Vane dropped the cigar, and sprang to his feet.

"Who are you?" he cried, "and what are you doing here?"

"There is no occasion for you to disturb yourself," said the new comer, quietly lifting his hat. "My name is Drage, and I am rector of one of the parishes in Springside. I am speaking to Mr. Philip Vane, I believe?"

"That's my name," said Vane, shortly, and resuming his seat, "though I cannot imagine how you knew it, unless you read it off my portmanteau, when you were dodging about the station this morning."

"I knew it before I was dodging about the station, as you are politely pleased to say," said Mr. Drage; "I know a great deal more about you, as you will find out, before this interview is at an end!"

"The deuce you do!" said Philip Vane, with a cynical smile; "I did not know my fame had extended to these parts. And what do you know about me, pray, Mr.—I forget your name."

"My name, I repeat, is Drage!"

"Drage—Drage," muttered Vane. "Any relation of Drage, of Abchurch-lane?"

"His son."

"A most respectable man, holding a leading position in the City. My dear Mr. Drage, I am delighted to make your acquaintance." And he held out his hand.

"I do not think," said Mr. Drage, taking no notice of the movement; "I do not think that you will be quite so pleased to make my acquaintance when you have heard all I have to say!"

Philip Vane looked hard at his companion, and noted with astonishment the hectic flush in his cheeks, the brightness of his eyes, the mobile working of his mouth.

"You may say what you please," he said, shortly. "It is a matter of perfect indifference to me. If you were in the City, your father or your father's clerks could tell you what position I hold there. City men are careful of what they say of each other; but you are a parson, and are privileged, I suppose?"

"I am a parson. It was in that capacity I became acquainted with the circumstances, the knowledge of which has induced me to seek you out. You are about to be married, Mr. Vane?"

"The dullest of laymen could have told

me that," said Mr. Vane, again with a cynical smile; "the report was in the newspapers."

"Exactly; but the point I am coming to has not yet found its way into the newspapers, though it will probably be published ere long."

"And it is—— ?"

"It is that you are married already!"

As Mr. Drage pronounced these words, a chill crept over Philip Vane, and for an instant he felt stupefied. But he speedily recovered himself, and looking his companion straight in the face, said:

"Either you have been befooled yourself, or you are trying to make a fool of me. In the latter case a hopeless and dangerous experiment."

"I should not attempt to put my wits in antagonism to yours," said the rector, quietly, "but facts have been said to be stubborn things, and the marriage register of Chepstow Church, with the signature of Philip Vane and Margaret Pierrepoint in one of its pages, is still extant!"

"Who told you of this?" asked Vane, breathing hard and speaking low.

"Your injured and deserted wife!"

"Is the woman who once passed under that name still alive?" inquired Vane, anxiously.

"The lady who has the terrible misfortune to hold that position," said the rector, drawing himself up and looking at his companion with disgust, "is alive and well."

"And you come from her?"

"No, I am here on her behalf, but not with her knowledge."

There was a momentary silence, broken by Vane, who said: "And what is your object in seeking this interview with me?"

"To warn you that I am cognisant of the position in which you stand; to warn you against the commission of the crime which you contemplate——"

"And to ask for a round sum to buy off the opposition of yourself and your interesting accomplice. Is not that it, Mr. Drage?"

"You scoundrel!" said Mr. Drage. "Do you dare to address such language to me—a clergyman?"

"If it comes to a question of language," said Vane, with a laugh, "I believe that 'scoundrel' is scarcely a term much bandied about in clerical society. As a matter of fact, I have found many gentlemen of your cloth not less open to a bribe than the rest of the world."

"You shall find one at least who scorns to discuss even the possibility of such an arrangement. Let us bring this interview to a close; you will clearly understand my object in seeking it. I came to warn you that if you persevered in carrying out this marriage, I will most assuredly hand you over to the law!"

"And I warn you that if you interfere in my business, I will kill you!" said Philip Vane, savagely.

"Such a threat has no terrors for me," said the rector.

"Perhaps not," said Vane, with a contemptuous glance at his companion's feeble frame; "however, I will find some means of bringing you and your client to reason."

"Stay," cried Mr. Drage, "I did not come here to bandy threats, but simply to discharge a duty. I will take no answer from you now, irritated as you are by the discovery that your position is known to me. Think over what I have said, and save yourself from the commission of this great sin. If you have occasion to write to me you know where I am to be found."

Philip Vane hesitated, then bowing his head, he said in a low tone:

"You are right. Do not think any more of the wild words I uttered in my rage; leave me to think over the circumstances in which I am placed, and the manner in which I can best extricate myself from the danger into which I was about to plunge. Leave me and—Heaven bless you for your kindness."

Mr. Drage looked at him with brimming eyes, and lifting his hat slowly walked off.

"That was the best way of settling him," said Philip Vane to himself, as he watched the rector down the path. "I must push this marriage on at once, and make some excuse for its being perfectly quiet."

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BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER VI. MISS MARTHA MAKES A PROMISE.

MAY had suddenly stepped from dream-land into a world of reality and bustle. What business could have brought so many people together? Who could have built so many houses; and how did each person know his own? The best novelty of all, and the one which she had most leisure to examine, was the great tall boy who had untied her bonnet-strings, and who was looking at her and talking to her, as if she had been some one of importance—a grown person at least—instead of being only little May from Monasterlea. In a world where such people as this were to be found there was no knowing what one might expect. Since the shock of her disappointment in Katherine from Camlough her imagination had been empty of an idol. Her heroine had vanished; but now, behold a hero! May, with a well-piled plate before her, folded her little hands under the table, and sighed—a sigh of ineffable joy, whose flavour was so high as almost to take away her appetite.

Paul found May a most unusual little person. He wondered if it was her age that made her so pleasant to him. She was not at all grown up, and yet was far from being a baby. He had never known a girl of this age before. It seemed to him that he had never even passed one in the streets. All the rest whom he had seen were either grown-up women or children. But this one was child enough to be petted and treated without ceremony, yet woman enough to be a desirable companion. Her laugh was so pleasant, and she was not afraid to talk, and she had such very lovely purple-coloured eyes!

Mrs. Finiston said: "And this is the little Italian!" kissed May, held her off and looked at her, and kissed her very heartily again. But after this she had no eyes nor ears for any one save Martha. It was on Martha that her eyes had longed to rest. She had wished for, and been almost hopeless of, this visit. She had much to say to this friend. She could not set out for the other world without first opening her heart to her. She might have written to Martha, was in the habit of writing to her. She told her punctually that Paul was an inch taller, and that butter was very dear. But a gnawing anxiety was still stored up in that heart which so protested that it must rid itself of a burden. She had waited and waited, hoping for this chance visit. It is so much easier for a woman to explain herself to a friend, while looking in the eyes or holding the hand, than to put a plain statement upon paper.

"Paul," said the mother, "will you take the little girl to see the shops? They will still be open for an hour."

She spoke pleadingly, and turned to urge her petition by a look. But Paul was already tying on May's bonnet.

"Oh, I hope they will not be shut," said the little girl, earnestly; "I have so many things to buy. Beads for Nanny, and ribbons for Bridget, and a cap with strings for Con the fool. He loses all his hats, and gets pains in his ears."

"If the shops be shut," said Paul, "why we shall only have to break in the doors."

"But I should not like you to get into trouble on my account," said May, as they swept down the stairs at a flying pace.

She was divided between her admiration of Paul's prowess and her fears for his safety. "I'd much rather not make any disturbance," said she.

"We shall see," said Paul, mischievously.

The shops were found to be open. Never was there such an expedition of wonder and excitement. Paul led his enchanted companion first into a large boot and shoe shop, and asked for woollen caps with strings for protecting the ears of fools. He next introduced her to a millinery establishment, festooned with bonnets and headdresses, feathers and flowers, satins and tinsels, the like of which May could not have imagined. And here Paul politely asked for rosary beads "fit for the pious use of old women in the country." May thought it very odd that it should be so difficult to get the things she wanted. After this they went to picture-shops for cap-ribbons, and to a jeweller's for sugar-stick. In the end, however, and after much perseverance, they succeeded in getting all they had been seeking for—and something more besides. For Paul, happening to have, by accident, the price of a pair of new boots in his pocket, recklessly expended half the sum on a cross of bog oak for May. It was handsomely carved, and hung round her neck by a pretty black chain. May was so absorbed and transfixed by gratitude and surprise, that he had almost to carry her over the next two crossings to save her from being run down by the jaunting-cars. And as his mind was rather uneasy about the money, he soothed his conscience by laying out the other half on a pretty new Bible for his mother. He resolved to wear his boots for another half-year. He would send them to the cobbler, and entreat the sullen servant in St. Audrey's-street to give them a little extra blacking every morning for the future. And if all that did not make things right, why then that disagreeable future must e'en take care of itself.

Meantime the two friends in the high room had been occupied in dividing the mother's trouble, share and share alike, between two faithful hearts.

It was nothing very new that Miss Martha had to hear; only the old, old story, with the slight variation of Mrs. Finiston's fears about her boy. The little bit of novelty being a vivid expectation of her own approaching death.

"I know you won't laugh at me, Martha," she said, "though, of course, I do not insist that this may not be a fancy. But you know I have been tolerably brave all my life. For a sick, lonely woman I have had very few whims. But now I believe that I am soon going to die."

Miss Martha cleared her throat twice before her voice was ready to answer.

"Of course I am not going to laugh at you, Elizabeth. It may, as you say, be a fancy. Very likely. But then, as we have all got to die, it may happen to come true. And you would like to arrange for it, just as if it were going to come true. I approve of that. Be ready for a thing, and it is nothing when it comes. If this appears coming, send for me without the delay of an instant, and I have no doubt at all that we shall help each other. There, now, we have faced it. And that being over, let me remind you that I am older than you, and shall probably die first."

Mrs. Finiston choked back a little flutter ot the heart. "I could wish to live," she said, "and I will send for you if there is time. In the mean time, I like to have things settled. There is Paul! Suppose I left him now, he has not a penny nor a friend in the world."

"He is the heir of Tobercevil," said Miss Martha, boldly.

"Martha!" almost shrieked Mrs. Finiston, letting her friend's hand drop in dismay.

"Now, Elizabeth, be quiet. There has been a great deal of nonsense talked about that curse, and I believe that it has worked all the harm. If Simon Finiston had not known that he was cursed he would probably never have been the miser that he is. Weak-minded people will submit to fate. The fascination of being marked out and prophesied over is strong for little souls. They like the eccentricity, and fall in with it, and pander to their morbid expectations. Simon Finiston had as good a chance as any man in the world, and his ruin is upon his own head."

Mrs. Finiston was aghast at this speech. She was so utterly surprised that for a moment she forgot her own troubles. Never before had Martha Mourne been heard to condemn Simon Finiston. But the explanation of this outburst was easy, though poor Mrs. Finiston was too preoccupied to see it at the time. Miss Martha had a fine little morsel of sublimity at the bottom of her simple heart. It may be that at this moment the memory of Simon Finiston, as he had been once, was dearer to her than the reality of young Paul in his present state of youthful undevelopment. But Miss Martha saw the drift of her friend's fears, and her handful of dried sentiment was cast out of the way like a sheaf of old

lavender from a drawer. The future of a young man, she acknowledged, was more precious than an old man's past.

The shock of this surprise over, Mrs. Finiston returned to her own affairs.

"But, Martha, Martha! what happens to one man may happen to another."

"I see no fears for your lad," said Miss Martha. "Unlike his uncle, he has grown up quite apart from the dangerous influence. He knows the evil, yet he has no morbid dread of it. And I see in his eye that he is no shallow soul. My friend, you must commit him to God and to me. If you go first I will try to be Elizabeth. I am not a mother, but it may be that it is in me to act a motherly part."

Mrs. Finiston sobbed, and squeezed the spinster's fingers.

"Well, then, let us see. He will one day be called upon to accept the inheritance of Tobereevil. Do as we will the future will place him in that position. You have prepared him well to receive such a trying stewardship. He will be close to us who are his friends. He will bring a generous ardour to the righting of what is wrong. And you know I am not so credulous as some, and I hold that when a person is striving to do his best, the Lord is very likely to step in and help him."

"It is true," said Mrs. Finiston, with many more sobs; "I have sometimes had dreams like this, but the bitterness of my fears always frightened them away."

"And as I have found you so credulous of prophecies," went on Miss Martha, with increased liveliness of manner, "I will venture to foretell something which the least superstitious may expect to come to pass. One Paul Finiston brought evil into the country. Another Paul shall cast it out. We shall see your boy break this ugly spell upon his race, and begin a reign of peace among our hills!"

Miss Martha wound up this little period with a most unusual note in her matter-of-fact voice. And Mrs. Finiston, carried away by the eloquence of her friend, flung her arms round her neck and wept all the remnant of the tears she had to weep. But in the course of a few minutes this scene was interrupted by the young people bursting in at the door, May flourishing invisible purchases over her head, and calling upon every one to admire them in the dark.

"And, oh, such hunting as we have had!" she exclaimed. "We were in at least ten shops before we could get anything we wanted. And it was so much better fun than if we had got everything at first. And please, Aunt Martha, do come close to the window and see what a beautiful present he has bought me!"

The entrance of a lamp here revealed Paul's face, which broadly reflected the girl's delight. The mother, who knew the secret of the broken shoes, and the friend who did not, exchanged meaning glances. They said to one another without words:

"This lad is not likely to become a churl or a miser!"

As Miss Martha was going out to her lawyer's next day, Mrs. Finiston put her a question which it may be thought she might have put to her before.

"And now that I have time to think of it, Martha, what is this business that has brought you up to town?"

The answer was hard to give, but Miss Martha was honest, and it came out bluntly.

"My landlord thinks of raising my rent," she said, showing some confusion of manner, "and"—here she was looking anxiously over the table for the gloves which were on her hands—"I do not feel justified in complying with his demand."

Mrs. Finiston knew well who the landlord was. Truly old Simon's disease was progressing.

CHAPTER VII. TRYING TO BE ELIZABETH.

Miss Martha was right and wrong when she persuaded Paul's mother that her fears of approaching death were unfounded. Three years passed away, and Mrs. Finiston still lived, still languished on her sofa, and paid her son's college fees, and wrote letters to her friend at Monasterlea. But one morning, while Miss Mourne bustled briskly about her breakfast-room, she got the news that Mrs. Finiston was no longer in the world. The end had been quick; there had been scarcely any warning, and little time for reluctance and regret.

Then Miss Martha, reading her letter with red eyes, had reason to remember that she had said, "I will try to be Elizabeth."

She would have remembered it in any case, but the special reason which suggested it came in the form of a message from the dead. It was simply, "Go to Simon," scrawled feebly upon a morsel of paper. The dying hand had been unable to write more.

Well, Miss Martha would go to Simon. She knew all that would have been added to those few eager words had there been time. Miss Martha would go to Simon.

Now Martha Mourne was not romantic. Even in her youth she had been remark-

able for nothing so much as simple common sense. The experience of a long life had done its utmost to make her the most matter-of-fact person in the world. And yet there was something within her that made it difficult that she should go to see Simon of Tobereevil. So difficult that Miss Martha would rather have marched into a battle-field in her neat bright goloshes and best black silk, and taken the few odd chances for her life. It was twenty years since she had seen Simon Finiston. And on the occasion of that last meeting she had broken off an engagement, which had then already lasted nearly a quarter of a life-time. She had sought him then as she was going to seek him now, had spoken to him, and left him before his own door-step. She was not going to have the blood of the poor upon her head, and their hunger-cry in her ears all her life. If he would persist in walking evil ways, why, then, she must let him walk them alone. She had waited and hoped till suspense had gnawed the pith out of her heart. Now she was going away to mend her wounds, and to fit herself for a life of wholesome labour elsewhere. It was in this way that she had talked to him, and left him, and he had walked his evil ways quite alone ever since. It had pleased her later to come back in her independence and settle for old age within a mile of Tobereevil. But it did not please her to confront this old man who could remind her that certain five years of her life had been full of a light which had failed her, and that other ten years had been racked with the worst grief that can be suffered, the ill-doing and disgrace of one entirely beloved. To save herself from death she would not have entered in at that rusty gate and travelled up that dismal avenue. But she knew very well what she had meant when she had said, "I will try to be Elizabeth."

The unkind March wind was making a jest of her all the time, plucking at her gown, and puffing in her face, and singing out a loud shrill song at her expense, that made the tender buds shiver on the trees. It was as hard upon her as would have been any other raw blustering thing that prided itself on youth, and had no pity upon the romance of a weather-beaten heart. Miss Martha often paused to consider her way, for the trees and the weeds seemed to have eaten up the landmarks which she had known. There were no longer any traces of the broad carriage drive. The branches of the trees hung across the path, and the rabbits scampered past her feet. Here and there a rusted gate barred her way, while a broken-down fence reluctantly allowed her to proceed. And as she made her way resolutely past all obstacles, there were other things besides the cruel east wind that plucked at her sorely. She remembered how many and many a time she had been used to trip up and down that avenue. She saw the moss-covered trunk on which she had liked to stand to get a favourite view down an arch of the trees, thinking pleasantly all the time of what things she and Simon would do when they should become owners of Tobereevil. They would prune and weed, and till and plant, until the wilderness should be changed into a paradise. They would make the mountains glad, and restore the tarnished honour of the Finistons. Then the desolation of Tobereevil had possessed a weird charm for her, as the haunt of an evil genius which was to be banished one day by the force of her strong goodwill. Then the mansion itself, the mansion which was just now showing a cold grey shoulder between the trees, had been as the castle of an ogre, which was to be charmed into a home of all blessedness and happiness. These had been a young girl's joyful expectations. Yet now all that she looked upon was sunk a hundred times deeper in ruin than it had been in the hour of her hope.

Miss Martha did not dwell upon these thoughts at all. She simply gathered up her wits and her skirts, and held both well in control, as she confronted the sour visage of the house. She remembered it well, she had known it morose, and threatening, and woebegone; but she saw now the marks of twenty years of extra desolation on its front. It had gained an air of surly recklessness, and much of its dignity was gone. There was a savage raggedness about its chimneys, and window-sills, and door-steps, tufted with tall wild grass, and fluttering with streamers of the most flaunting weeds. The greenness of the earth had not been content with eating up the approaches to the walls, but seemed resolved to make its way under the very roof itself.

Miss Martha saw the one cow feeding on the lawn, and the few famished hens that were pecking about the door-step. The door was opened by a dreadful old woman, a mass of rags and patches, whose face was disfigured, apparently, by the grime and discontent of years. This was the wretched old woman who was held in aversion by the country because, for some reasons best

known to herself, she had chosen to devote her services to the miser of Tobereevil; to live a life of starvation under an accursed roof. It was doubtless but seldom that she was required to answer a summons at that inhospitable door. She looked as scared at the wholesome apparition of Miss Mourne, as if she had been suddenly confronted with a whole gang of thieves.

All across the vast and empty stone hall, and away in the chamber where he stood at the moment, Simon Finiston heard wrangling at his door. Old Tibbie's discordant voice echoed among the rafters like the sound of a loud quarrel. Miss Martha's tones did not travel so far, but every harsh note of Tibbie's had an echo of its own, and there might have been an angry crowd upon the door-step.

The miser had been pacing up and down his room, being in a humour more than usually timorous. As he walked he twisted his hands together wildly, and at intervals struck his forehead in the agony of his mind. He was beginning to fear that his memory failed him. He was subject to momentary forgetfulness of the exact position of each tittle of his possessions. Sometimes, for an instant, he could not remember in which pocket he had placed the key of the drawer, in which he kept the key of the closet, in which was hid the key of the desk, where lay safely, under heaps of yellow papers, the key of the safe in which a large amount of money was stored. This noise in his hall alarmed him. There were loaded pistols upon a bench in a corner, and he placed his hand upon one in terror, and looked towards the door. The door opened and Miss Martha came in, having vanquished Tibbie, and sent her growling to her den.

"You need not be alarmed, sir," said she, cheerfully, "I am come to rob you of nothing but a few moments of your time."

Then these two, who had been lovers, looked upon one another.

The old man was tall, withered, and blighted-looking, and so ill-clad, that the blast from the door seemed to pierce him where he stood. It was difficult to believe that he had once been handsome, yet the features were imposing, though hacked and notched by the wrinkles and hollows of the flesh. Once the countenance had been pleasant and bland, but there were snarling lines defacing it now that made one shrink from the creature, shadowy as he was. Time had been when the powdered curls had hung gracefully over the polished forehead, when the complexion had worn a manly hue above the dainty lace of his ruffles, and when his well-cut profile had looked all the more stately from the becomingness of the quaint and jaunty queue. Time had been when no finer foot and leg had stepped down the country-dance. Now the limbs hung lank and limp, the knees clinging together under the patched and threadbare garb.

A violent fit of agitation seized him as Miss Martha spoke. Amazement, shame, and embarrassment struggled all together in his face. It was not the sight of Miss Martha that had moved him, but the sound of her voice. The twenty years had done their work upon her too, and out of the fogs of his puzzled brain he might hardly have recognised her. She had never been a beauty; only one of those maidens whose temper and wit idealise the homeliness of their features in the eyes of all those who come under their spell. A husband who had married Martha in her youth would have gone on thinking her a beauty till her death; but a lover who had not seen her since her youth would now wonder to find that she had altered into a plain-featured woman. The memory would present her as a person of rare charms, rather than a creature of mere freshness and comeliness, shining with good sense and grace. But Simon knew her by her voice. It echoed yet her steady self-containment and simple goodwill, and now that the sparkle had left her eyes, it was the truest messenger of the spirit still within her.

The narrow soul of the miser was stabbed on the instant by the idea that here was his former love come in person to reproach him, to try to assert something of her olden power, so as to wheedle him into lowering her heavy rent. He could not talk to her face to face, and he would not, and as she was there confronting him, and, being nearest the door, in a way held him prisoner, he instinctively put up a blind which might enable him to hold parley with her at ease.

A look of cunning gleamed out of the confusion of his face, and he became tranquil.

"Pray be seated, madam," he said, with an assumption of benevolence and stateliness. He drew his frail garment around him, and sat down on one of the few old carved oaken chairs that were in the room. To the cushions of these still clung a few fragments of the ruby-tinted velvet, which had made some attempt at covering them when Martha had seen them last. The chilly March sun-gleam flickered down

out of the uncurtained window above his head, and laughed over his chair, and lit up the variegations of his many-coloured robe. The room was sheathed in oak, yet the floor was rotted and broken in many places. The spiders had been at work to make draperies for the windows, and cobwebs were the only hangings on the walls. The ceiling had been painted, but the damp had superadded many pictures of its own, whose rude outlines obtruded themselves among flowers, and hid smiling, fading figures under their grievous blots.

"I have expected this visit," said Mr. Finiston, with a courtly air, while yet Miss Martha was trying to right her thoughts, which had been somewhat thrown awry by the first glimpse of the picture now before her. "You are probably a messenger from my tenant at Monasterlea. A relation perhaps. I had the pleasure of knowing Miss Mourne many years ago, and I see some likeness. A very respectable tenant she is, but pays me such a dreadfully low rent —such a dreadfully low rent!"

He shook his head from side to side with his eyes averted from his visitor, and rubbed his hands slowly, and rocked himself in his chair.

Miss Martha drew her breath hard, and gazed at him fixedly. He would not meet her eyes. In a few moments her amazement abated, and her presence of mind returned. She believed that he had recognised her, but she could not be sure. At all events, either his cunning cowardice or his want of memory might make the task she had undertaken less difficult.

"I need not introduce myself," she said. "It is true I am but the messenger of another. I come from Monasterlea, but not upon the business of your tenant."

"Eh?" asked he, sharply. "Not upon your—not upon her business? What then, madam, what then? Not, I hope, with a story from any of these smaller rascally tenants who want their land for nothing, and would drive a wretched landlord to the workhouse? If you come, madam, about them, I will wish you a good morning on the instant. A good morning, madam. I wish you a very good morning."

He arose hastily and made a grotesque bow, a tremulous, mocking attempt at courtesy, and his face had begun to work with a passion which brought out all those snarling lines upon it.

"Stay, sir," said Miss Martha, and her quick steady tone affected him so that he dropped back nervelessly into his chair.

"I am come, sir, altogether about affairs of your own," said Miss Martha; "to bring you news. Your brother's wife is dead, Mr. Finiston."

He pricked up his ears and sat bolt upright.

"Well, madam, I should not be surprised. A spendthrift creature who could not thrive. She came here to see me with lace trimmings on her dress. But I told her my mind, and I pointed out the destitution that would fall upon her. I understand that her husband died of starvation, the consequence of his improvidence and her extravagance. They would have dragged me down to want with themselves, but I was much too wise for that. I was always a sparing man, madam, and it is thanks to my economy that I have still bread to eat, and have got a roof over my head."

"I find you are misinformed," said Miss Martha. "Your brother died of fever, and he was a happy man, and a prudent one, while he lived. His wife was a very noble woman, who for years denied herself many comforts in the hope of being able to provide for her son. She has died without fulfilling this purpose, and all her slight means have disappeared with herself. I have come here expressly to tell you that her son is now alone and without means of living. And her son, sir, is Paul Finiston, your nephew and heir."

The old man's face had grown darker and more frightened at every word she spoke.

"Well, well, well," he said, hoarsely, clutching his chair with both hands and gazing now straight at Miss Martha, without thinking of who she was. "Heir, she said, heir. Ay! And pray, madam, who says there is anything to inherit? Barely enough property to keep a man alive, with the expenses of a servant, and a cat to keep down the rats. Would you rob an old man of his crust, madam? Would you take it out of his mouth to give it to a young beggar who can work, madam?"

"That is not what we propose, sir," said Miss Martha, unflinchingly. "We ask you to use a small part of your wealth only to help the poor boy to independence. Even a few hundred pounds——"

A bitter shriek burst from the old man's lips, and he got up trembling in a paroxysm of passion.

"Away!" he cried, waving his hand over his head. "Away! you who deserted me in my need, and now come back to rob me! I will not have you sitting there looking at me. I will not——" He was tottering towards her with his menacing hand, but

poor Miss Martha, cowed at last, here rose in trepidation and fled from the house.

She was too old for tears and lamenting, but she walked home from Tobereevil over miles of ground that had grown infinitely bleaker since the morning. The cold March air seemed to pinch her heart.

"You who deserted me in my need," quoth she, tearfully. "Why; was I not patient? was I not patient?" But Miss Martha would have been ashamed to let her doubts and regrets be known. None were in her confidence but the trees, and the primrose drifts, and the chilly blue peaks of the hills. She complained of nothing when she reached home but a slight touch of rheumatism from that pitiless east wind!

In the evening she was still a little ill from her rheumatism, so it was May who wrote the letter which Martha had meant to write. And young Paul Finiston received the following epistle in his garret:

My dear Paul,—It is Aunt Martha who is really writing this letter, only I am by accident holding her pen. Aunt Martha wishes to tell you that she has been to your uncle, Mr. Finiston, and that she is afraid he will never do anything to help you, unless you come here to see him, when, perhaps, he might get fond of you. *I* am very glad that you have nothing to do with him, for he is a dreadful old man, and would not give a crumb to save any one from starving. Aunt Martha begs that you will come here and stay. She will give you a nice little room off the cloisters beside the chapel, and Aunt Martha says you are a great deal too sensible to be afraid of ghosts. She has made some new marmalade, and the garden is full of crocuses. *I* would like you very much to come, but I think it would be happier for you to earn your own money, and never mind that dreadful old man. Aunt Martha sends you a little note, which she says is a loan from me, and may be useful on your journey down here.

I am, dear Paul,
In Aunt Martha's name,
Your very old friend,
May Mourne.

"How odd that the little one should be wiser than the old woman!" said Paul. This is the way in which people think those the wisest who agree with themselves. "I should like to see her again, but I have no time to stay dallying with children."

Paul was a man of twenty-one now, looking old for his age, and feeling himself thirty-six at least. Of course May was still the little body in the prim grey pelisse, and with the sweet dark eyes. "Afraid of ghosts! Poor little baby! But she has treated me very honestly, and I will tell her what I am really afraid of." So Paul wrote:

My dear old Friend,—I received your Aunt Martha's letter, and I approve so heartily of the sentiments of the person who held the pen that I do not intend visiting Monasterlea, nor approaching one inch nearer to my respectable uncle at Tobereevil. I am not quite sure as to whether I could play the part of beggar or not, having never tried, but of this I am sure, that it is best for myself and the old gentleman that some hundreds of leagues of the sea should come between us. Upon nearer acquaintance I might do him some harm. Is there not a prophecy included in that time-honoured curse of our family? I might never be able to forget that I am a kinsman of the miser, and might be tempted to do mischief for the sake of succeeding generations. If you do not understand this, ask your Aunt Martha, and she will explain it to you. Tell her, with my heartfelt thanks, that I am sorry she undertook a painful office for my sake, that I would fain be in the nice little bedroom off the cloisters, but I shall find myself sooner in the rigging of a South American vessel. There is a captain from Liverpool now lying in the docks who will give me my passage for my services. I have here no prospect that I can see, except that of being a clerk or a porter, and I prefer bodily labour in a new country.

And now, my dear little old friend, goodbye. Tell your Aunt Martha that I accept your loan, and will sew it in my coat against time of sickness. Tell her not to count it a bad debt. I commit my mother's grave to her memory and yours. If you keep it in your minds I shall not feel it quite deserted.

Paul Finiston.

Paul little thought of the storm which this letter was to create at Monasterlea. Miss Martha turned pale when she read it, and, for the first time in her life, spoke angrily to her niece.

"May! May!" she cried, "what was in that letter? I intrusted the writing of it to you, and you have driven the poor boy across the sea!"

"I did not mean it," said May, weeping. "I only said that I would rather he earned money for himself."

"I told you to write a welcome, and you have warned him away," said Miss Martha.

"Oh, why did I not write myself? The boy will be drowned, and we shall have done it between us. Oh, you cruel, strange girl. Oh, Elizabeth! poor Elizabeth!"

"Aunt Martha!" said May, springing up alert. "Cannot we go to Dublin and stop him?"

"Quick, then!" said Miss Martha. And in another hour they were upon the road.

Arrived in Dublin, they traced Paul from his old dwelling to a humbler lodging. Here they were informed that the young man—a gentleman indeed he was—had left the night before, and gone on board a ship lying at the quay. They hurried down to the quay, disappointed and hopeless, to gaze among the vessels and ask questions. It was early in the morning, and they had been driving over the roads all day yesterday, and all last night. The sun was shining gaily on the bridge as they halt crossed it, and stood leaning over the side. A vessel was moving slowly at some distance, clumsily disengaging itself from the craft around. A faint cheer reached their ears, making them look to this quarter; and May saw Paul on the deck of the moving ship.

"Where, where?" said Miss Martha.

"Oh, Aunt Martha, there! That tall young man with his hat off!"

They left the bridge and hurried along the quay. They came almost alongside of the ship, but it was too far away for anything but signs to pass between Paul and his friends. He had recognised Miss Martha at once, but not so easily the maiden by her side. Her hat had fallen back on her shoulders, her face was flushed with anxiety and grief, her hands were involuntarily extended towards the ship. Paul folded his arms, and gazed sadly at her figure till the ship carried him away, and crowds of tall masts rose up and hid her from his sight. He took her image thus away with him; the loveliest young maiden, he thought, his eyes had ever seen.

LEGENDS OF THE KIFFHÄUSER.

"I HAVE a nice little batch of legends from the Kiffhäuser," began Maximilian, "which I need not tell you is the name of a mountain not many leagues distant from Erfurt."

"Come, come," interrupted Edgar, "you are not going to tell us the old story of Peter Klaus, the goatherd, upon which Washington Irving founded his Rip van Winkle? Please, don't tell us that. We have it at our fingers' ends already."

"So I supposed," retorted Maximilian, "and therefore I meant to pass over Peter altogether. Still his story belongs to the same series as those which I am about to recount, all being connected with the popular belief that the great Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, who, according to history, perished in a crusade in Asia towards the end of the twelfth century, is still living in the Kiffhäuser with a number of knightly attendants."

"And I have heard," said Laurence, "that among his retinue is a certain Queen Holle, who acts as his housekeeper, though she played no part in his actual history. She was the daughter of a king, they say, and was cruelly murdered. Her spirit finding no rest in the grave, wandered about without fixed habitation, till at last she heard that the Emperor Frederick had secured for himself a snug retreat in the Kiffhäuser. Having learned that he was a just and kindly man, she proceeded to the mountain, and was only too glad to accept the office of waiting upon the emperor and his numerous retainers."

"I wonder where she heard of Frederick's kindness!" ejaculated Edgar. "The Emperor Barbarossa is a well-known historical character, and this singular Queen Holle, if she ever lived at all, must have died long before his time."

"Nay," observed Maximilian, "I strongly suspect that she is neither a princess nor a ghost, but that she is the Holle of Pagan Germany, who has crept into a Christian legend. However, to show how well her memory has been preserved, I will relate a legend that is not so old as the present century. During one of the campaigns of the Emperor Napoleon in Germany, it appears a French marshal coming to Nordhäusen, cast his eyes upon the ruins of the ancient castle on the Kiffhäuser, and hearing that they were haunted, determined that they should afford him a night's lodging. All attempts to dissuade him from his purpose were futile; he slept in the ruined castle, and at midnight received a visit from Queen Holle, who had been sent by the Emperor Frederick for the purpose of bidding him warn Napoleon against the projected invasion of Russia. She added, that if Napoleon valued his own reputation, he would evacuate Germany without delay, since the Emperor Frederick did not like to see his German people subjected to Frenchmen. The marshal, it is said, truthfully conveyed the message to the French Emperor, and made such an impression upon all his generals, that with

one voice they implored him to desist from the Russian expedition."

"And, as we all know, they implored to little purpose," added Edgar. "It is a strange thing that the advice of a ghost is hardly ever followed. But surely I have heard somewhere that the long-lived emperor in the Kiffhäuser is not Frederick Barbarossa, but one of the Othos, whose spirit, in consequence of some difficulties with the church, was doomed to float about for some years after his death, like that of Queen Holle, till at last it found a refuge in the Kiffhäuser."

"Good," remarked Maximilian; "your story is just in accordance with some of the local traditions. And, strange to say, the two accounts of the imperial occupants of the Kiffhäuser are made to harmonise with each other. There is a legend to the effect, that after residing in the mountain for several centuries, the Emperor Otho quitted that abode, which was immediately afterwards occupied by Frederick Barbarossa, who lives there still. Some say that Otho, on leaving the Kiffhäuser, betook himself to his grave, and there rested in peace. Others assert that he merely shifted his quarters to the castle of Quedlinburg, and that he now resides in the cellars of that venerable edifice. His vitality seems to be of a very equivocal kind, for a maid-servant, who is reported to have seen him, represented that he was made of gold, and unable to stir. This notion of gold is expanded into a prophecy, according to which Quedlinburg Castle will one day be burned down, and be rebuilt with the gold into which the emperor's body has been transmuted."

"There is no doubt," said Edgar, "that these exceptional legends point to the first Otho, whose parents, Henry the Fowler and Matilda, were buried at Quedlinburg. The second and third of the name both perished in Italy."

"I perfectly agree with you," returned Maximilian. "The younger Othos were scarcely figures to be prominent in a whole cycle of German legends, and, if I remember right, Otho the Great had a reddish beard, like that from which Frederick derived his name Barbarossa."

"I presume you have more legends relating to the Kiffhäuser. Let us have one," said Laurence to Maximilian.

"Very good," said Maximilian to Laurence. "Once upon a time a poor man of Tilleda, a village at the foot of the mountain, entertained, according to custom, the sponsors for his eighth child. The wine, it may be supposed, soon ran short, and the happy parent ordered his eldest daughter, a comely girl in her teens, to fetch some more from the cellar. Knowing the condition of the cellar, the damsel, somewhat embarrassed by the order, asked her father what particular cellar he had in view. 'The cellar of the old knights in the Kiffhäuser,' he replied, meaning nothing more than a joke. The innocent girl, however, thought that he was in earnest, and accordingly, with a small pail in her hand, she ascended the mountain till she reached a large cavern, which she had never seen before, and at the entrance of which she saw a comely-looking dame, with a bundle of keys at her side. Though somewhat startled, she stated the cause of her expedition, and the hospitable dame promised that, if she would follow her, she should receive, free of charge, a supply of far better wine than her father had ever tasted. As they proceeded together through a subterranean passage, the strange lady made anxious inquiries as to how things were going on at Tilleda. It appeared that she had once lived in the very house now tenanted by the girl's father, and had been carried off by the knights, who not long before had borne away from Kelbra, a small town in the neighbourhood, four beautiful maidens, who might still sometimes be seen riding about on magnificently accoutred horses. As her age advanced she had been appointed superintendent of the cellars."

"This little episode," observed Laurence, "I find extremely interesting. The superintendent of the cellars obviously corresponds to Queen Holle, so that we evidently have the same person represented with natural and supernatural attributes."

"After a while they reached a door, which, opened by the lady with the keys, disclosed a spacious cellar, on each side of which lay vast barrels. From one of these the girl's pail was filled, and she was told by her guide that, whenever any particular festival was held at her father's house, she might come for more. She was warned, however, not to inform any one besides her father whence the beverage was obtained, and more especially enjoined never to sell a drop of it. A free gift should be freely dispensed, and whoever slighted this sacred maxim would surely find cause for repentance. The wine was carried home, and proved excellent, and a few days afterwards another feast was given, at which another sample of the delicious liquor made its appearance. The poor man of Tilleda was for a time very popular, but soon his neighbours began to shake their heads and whisper."

"Ah," exclaimed Edgar, "when a man is equally famed for the emptiness of his pockets and the excellence of his wine, he can hardly hope to escape remark."

"Of all the inquisitive neighbours," continued Maximilian, "the most inquisitive was an innkeeper, who was in the habit of adulterating his liquors, and who had no sooner tasted the marvellous wine than he was convinced that it might be diluted to any extent, and still command a high price. He therefore took occasion to watch the girl during one of her ascents of the Kiffhäuser, and, having watched her proceedings, and ascertained the situation of the door, set out for the cellar one evening on his own account, trundling before him, on a wheelbarrow, the largest barrel he could find. When he approached the entrance he was overwhelmed by a sudden darkness, and a violent hurricane hurled him and his barrel from crag to crag, till at last he found himself in a vault. While thus uncomfortably lodged he saw passing before him a coffin, covered with a pall, which was followed by his wife and some of his neighbours. He swooned, and when he recovered he was still in the vault, where he heard the clock of the village church striking midnight directly over his head. He was evidently in the burial-place of Tilleda."

"A singular operation on the part of the hurricane," remarked Edgar.

"From his unpleasant predicament he was relieved by a monk," proceeded Maximilian, "who, leading him to a flight of steps, pressed some money into his hand without uttering a word, and, having conducted him through an open door, laid him at the foot of the mountain. Shivering with cold, he reached home by one o'clock, and immediately took to his bed, where, within three days, he died. The money given to him by the monk exactly covered the expenses of his funeral."

"Clearly another story of the Ali Baba kind," said Laurence, "turning on the notion of a good and a bad treasure seeker. The law, however, that supernatural gifts may not be sold is altogether new."

"And observe," said Maximilian, "that an infringement of this law leads to nothing less than the death of the criminal. All the legends of the Kiffhäuser bear some reference to a hidden treasure, though they differ from each other in detail. The story is told, for instance, of a shepherd, who, being too poor to marry his sweetheart, was strolling miserably on the mountain, till he found a flower of singular beauty, which he stuck in his hat. He also entered a cavern, where he found lying about a number of small glittering stones, which he put into his pocket. Just as he was about to return into the open air, a human voice warned him not to leave the best behind, and immediately he ran outside the cavern, and the door was closed behind him. The flower, which he had stuck in his hat as a gift for his sweetheart, was gone, and what made the loss the more mortifying, a dwarf who suddenly stood before him told him that it was more valuable than all the treasures of the mountain. When he reached home, the stones with which he had filled his pockets proved to be ingots of gold, and he married in comfortable circumstances. But the 'Wunder-Blume' (wonderful flower), as they call it, was lost for ever, though the mountaineers search for it to this day."

"One might almost fancy that two stories are here combined into one," remarked Laurence, "and that the wondrous flower is altogether independent of the treasures of Frederick Barbarossa. It is found, indeed, only to be lost, and this answers no purpose whatever."

"I am not so sure of that," returned Edgar. "In my opinion, the temporary possession of the flower enabled the shepherd to find the golden ingots, and therefore he was, to a limited extent, benefited by its virtues."

"And your opinion is doubtless correct," observed Maximilian, "for according to another legend of the Kiffhäuser, a peasant accidentally trod so hard upon a flower of the kind, that it was broken off the stalk, and remained attached to his shoe-buckle. This endowed him with the power of seeing spirits, and soon the mountain opened, and the emperor and his retinue came out to play at skittles, the potentate in this case being not Frederick but Otho. It is recorded that they played the game in a singular style, not bowling straight at the pins, but flinging them up in the air, so that they hit the mark on their descent. At midnight they vanished, and the mountain closed behind them. A skittle, which the shepherd contrived to take home, proved to be of pure gold."

"This tale does not point to such a good moral as that about the girl and the wine," objected Edgar.

"Certainly not," said Maximilian. "Here is one of an entirely opposite tendency. A shepherd, while whistling a tune near the ruined castle, was asked by a dwarf if he

would like to see the Emperor Frederick. He readily answered in the affirmative, and was conducted into a grotto, the sides of which glistened with golden stars, while the emperor, magnificently attired, sat at a stone table in the centre, with a light burning before him. The shepherd made a low bow, constantly glancing at the treasures of the grotto, till, after a pause, the emperor asked him if ravens still flew about the mountain. On the man answering that they did, the emperor lifted up his hands and exclaimed, in a melancholy voice, 'Then I must sleep here for many years more!' Thereupon the shepherd retired with the dwarf, and to his annoyance did not receive so much as a keepsake."

"That I suppose was because he was the bringer of bad tidings," suggested Edgar.

"I cannot say," rejoined Maximilian. "Possibly the furtive glances at the treasures of the grotto had something to do with it; for, as we have seen, the greed of gain is not esteemed at the Kiffhäuser. So great, however, is the emperor's love of music, that on one occasion he was liberal to a band of itinerant musicians, who played at midnight on the mountain in the hope of being handsomely rewarded. While they were in the middle of the second tune the emperor's daughter came up to them trippingly, and by mute gestures requested them to follow her."

"The emperor's daughter!" cried Laurence. "Queen Holle in another shape!"

"The mountain opened," continued Maximilian, "and they found themselves in a cavern, where a sumptuous banquet was spread before them. Of this they partook freely, and were somewhat disappointed that no one offered them any of the surrounding treasures. They cheered themselves, however, with the hope that they would receive something handsome on parting, and, indeed, when they took their leave at dawn, the emperor's daughter, in obedience to her father's wish, presented each of them with a small green bush. This they accepted with due reverence, but no sooner were they in the open air than they all laughed aloud at the stinginess of their imperial host, and, with the exception of one, flung away the seemingly worthless gifts. The one who had been less precipitate found, when he reached home, that every leaf of his bush had been changed into a broad piece of gold. He communicated his good fortune to his comrades, who immediately began to search for the slighted treasure; but their search was in vain."

"After all," inquired Edgar, "which emperor do you regard as the legitimate occupant of the Kiffhäuser—Frederick or Otho, or both?"

"Unquestionably neither," responded Maximilian. "Though historical names occur in the legends, these have no reference to anything that occurred during the eventful lives of the two emperors who bore them. There is no reason that either Otho or Frederick should be the owner of a hidden treasure. The original occupant of the mansion was no doubt some sort of gnome belonging to pre-historical tradition. The earlier Saxon emperors, of whom Otho is the greatest, was associated with Quedlinburg, and the famous Diet of 1181, at which Henry the Lion was pardoned by his forgiving lord, connected the name of Frederick with Erfurt. These two emperors became especially marked men in the immediate vicinity of the Kiffhäuser, and the anonymous gnome in course of time received two baptismal appellations to which he was in nowise entitled."

THE TWO THREADS.

A BABE, who crept from the downy nest
Fond hands had loved to deck,
Glowing and sweet from its rosy rest,
To cling, caressing and caressed,
To its gentle mother's neck;
Another, who shrank in its squalid lair,
In the noisy crowded court,
Dreading to waken to curse and blow,
The woman, whose life of sin and woe,
Won from sleep a respite short.
From the darkness and the light,
Weave the black thread, weave the white.

A girl, in her graceful guarded home,
Mid sunshine, and birds, and flowers,
Whose fair face brightened as she heard
Her gallant lover's wooing word,
In the fragrant gloaming hours.
Another, tossed out, a nameless waif,
On the awful sea of life,
Mid poverty, ignorance, and wrong;
Young pulses beating full and strong
For the fierce unaided strife.
From the darkness and the light,
Weave the black thread, weave the white.

A wife, beside her household hearth,
In her happy matron pride,
Raising her infant in her arms,
Showing its thousand baby charms
To the father at her side.
Another, who stood on the river's banks,
Hearing her weakling's cries;
Thinking, "a plunge would end for both;
Cruelty, hunger, and broken troth,
Harsh earth, and iron skies."
From the darkness and the light,
Weave the black thread, weave the white.

Her children's children at her knee,
With friends and kindred round,
An aged woman with silver hair,
Passing from life, mid the love and prayer,
That her gracious evening crowned.
Another, crouched by the stinted warmth

Of the workhouse homeless hearth;
Her bitter fare unkindly given;
Knowing as little of joys in Heaven
As of gladness on the earth.
From the darkness and the light,
Weave the black thread, weave the white.

A soul that sprang from the rose-strewn turf,
With its carven cross adorned.
Another, that left its pauper's grave,
Where rank and coarse the grasses wave,
O'er rest, unnamed, unmourned.
And two, who sought their Redeemer's feet,
By His saving blood to plead,
May He in His mercy guide us all,
For sunbeams and shadows strangely fall;
The riddle is hard to read.
From the darkness and the light,
Weave the black thread, weave the white.

THE BLUEBOTTLE FLY.

A French Art-Student's Story.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

For the first few minutes I ran swiftly down the hollow, anxious to escape as quickly as possible from the baleful influence of the occupants of the coucou, amongst whom the bluebottle fly had assumed the greatest importance to my fancy. The descent was rapid, and the sound of the grating wheels was soon lost in the distance. I knew this part of the wood well enough. The narrow gorge, dividing the plateau on which stood the Three Acacias from that occupied by that of the White Thorn, was steep and difficult to pass, and visitors in general preferred the broad green alley to this rugged path. But I was too much delighted at finding myself once more at liberty to heed the danger presented either by the loose stones or the slippery moss, and laughed in mockery at my own awkwardness as I alternately stumbled and slid to the bottom. Here I trod the green sward merrily enough, rejoicing in the silence, and looking down each opening between the trees for new effects of light and sunshine. But what was my dismay on perceiving that my nerves had become so completely shattered by the emotions I had undergone, and my head so completely bewildered — perhaps still rather disturbed by the petit bleu— that I felt no longer the same eager interest in the beauties of nature that I had done on first starting in the morning. I began to find myself burdened, moreover, with my tools, and much worn by my previous walk, and once or twice wished myself quietly seated in my usual place at the studio.

The hill gained, however, and the White Thorn reached, I felt a momentary return of the hope and faith which had led me thus far to seek their fulfilment, and began the self-discipline necessary to insure forgetfulness by compelling myself to give undivided attention to the beautiful study spread out by nature's hand before me. The breeze from the opposite hill brought freedom and freshness on its wings; and as I fixed my position and spread my tools all around me on the grass, inhaling the while the intoxication of the scene, I fondly hoped that all memory of the excitement I had undergone would soon be obliterated. I can safely declare that I tried to dissipate my thoughts by every means in my power. I whistled aloud; I sang the tunes most in vogue amongst us; I pulled up the long grass and nibbled it between my teeth, and then set to work at arranging my colours and crayons with that feverish and noisy ardour which never bodes good to the projects of the artist. The White Thorn had long ceased to blossom, but the dead flowers lay in thick masses on the turf beneath, and every time I stamped my foot impatiently a faint perfume arose like a souvenir of the past spring, balmy and aromatic as incense. It would have soothed me at any other time, but just now it served but to add to my irritation. Everything, in short, was at first inclined to assume a green and yellow tinge and flavour, and I was fain to make a desperate effort to clear my brain, and concentrate my attention on my labour. So great is the power of will, especially when aided by outward circumstances, that at last I could view, without any great disturbance of mind, the myriads of flies disporting themselves in their mazy dance over the pool beneath, and could even listen to the buzz of the humble-bee as he flew past, without that twitching of the mouth and quivering of the eyelids which the remembrance of the carrion fly in the coucou had at first occasioned. By degrees I grew more calm, and began at last to recover from the disagreeable impression I had experienced.

I sketched out the valley and the hills of Sèvres which lay beyond. There were certain fleecy clouds gathered in strange groups upon the summit of those hills, and as I gazed intently on their airy and fantastic shapes, all my enthusiastic love of art returned. Nature was victorious. The enemy was conquered, and as I rubbed the clouds in on the coarse grey tinted paper, softening down the hard black chalk into the transparent tint which represented the forms so well, I felt that faith and hope were reviving fast within me, and that I

was myself again. I had just terminated my rough sketch of the view from the White Thorn, to which the clouds I had been rubbing in were destined to serve as horizon—a little too hard perhaps, for my hand had scarcely recovered its wonted lightness and elasticity. But I left the softening to some future time, for I was eager to accomplish many other sketches before the strong glare of noon should drive me to seek shelter in the deep shade of the wood. Alas! the drawing of the White Thorn was *never* softened down, and a long and dreary time elapsed before I completed another. My mother had it framed, however, rough and unfinished as it was, and it hangs over the little font of holy water by her bedside. Poor soul! for many months she thought it would be the last I should ever execute, and prized and treasured it accordingly.

The sketch was concluded. The effect was satisfactory even to myself, and I stepped back with true artistic complacency to view the drawing from a distance, and compare it with the original clouds, now fast sailing away behind the hills, and growing tinged with the reflection of the foliage, while the line of wood was lighted in its turn by the strange blending of both objects into one undefined outline, leaving the gazer in doubt as to where the earth ended, and the sky began.

I had just determined on seizing this effect, said to be the most difficult to produce in the whole range of the landscape painter's art. I was in a rapture of delight. A sudden enlightenment had broken in upon me. I knew I should succeed; I felt that the hour had arrived. Nature herself was whispering in my ear the secret of which I had been so long in search, and in a kind of artistic frenzy I flung myself upon the ground, burying my face amid the grass to listen to her holy teaching.

Just then, when my whole soul was detached from earth in communion with itself, and my very life had entered, as it were, into the new world thus suddenly opened to my sight, I was startled by a cry of anguish—a human cry, so full of pain and agony that, as it broke upon the stillness of the air, every fibre in my frame became convulsed. Strange to say, it seemed so close to my ear that I could hardly believe that it had not proceeded from some one standing by my side, and it was only on reflection I remembered that it must have been brought by the wind across the hollow. The sort of crag on which stands the White Thorn juts out on one side over the ravine beneath, which is so completely choked up in that direction with brushwood and briars that the view over the wood is completely hidden. Down this very side had been worn a rough uneven path through the covert which lies below; and the joyous laugh of the young artist in search of the picturesque even there is often heard issuing from amongst the seemingly impenetrable wood, startling almost into fits the good bourgeois who has been toiling up the hill on the other side, to enjoy the view from the White Thorn. But no joyous laughter greeted my ear at this moment. The deadly shriek which had caused me suddenly to abandon my work just when I was at the highest point of interest had been followed by a pause, during which the stillness seemed dread and awful as that of the grave. And terrible as the shock had been, the silence which ensued appeared more frightful still.

While I stood pale and trembling, listening with intense eagerness to catch the slightest sound, the boughs of the ravine began to rustle furiously, and I became aware of the gasping effort and the panting breath of some individual striving with might and main to attain the height at which I stood. Presently a hoarse voice called aloud from half-way up the path. The accents were rude and rough:

"Hallo there, you painter; just make haste here, will you, and lend us a hand. Curse the prickly brambles; they are tearing me to pieces! Here, come along quick, for God's sake! The devil seize me if I can get a step higher! We are in the greatest trouble down below, and want your help."

The speaker had opened the branches wide. I looked down to where he was standing with extended arms and head thrown back. In a moment I recognised the military man who had sat on the swing-board of Tony Lanterneau's concou.

"Come quick!" exclaimed he, in a breathless tone. "You must lose no time." And as he let go the boughs on one side, and swung round to stretch his hand towards me, the action was so helpless, so like that of a drowning mariner endeavouring to seize the rope thrown to him amid the boiling surge, that I obeyed the summons almost mechanically, and scrambled down to where he was standing, in actual danger, upon a loose stone which threatened each moment to give way beneath his feet.

"Come quick—come quick!" again exclaimed he in a hoarse whisper, at the same time seizing me by the arm with such

strong grip that he almost threw me off my balance, and for a moment we both tottered, in doubt whether we should not roll together to the bottom of the hollow. But my youth and elastic step soon cleared the difficulties of the passage, and I followed the stranger in bewilderment, the only impression on my brain being that my evil destiny was about to begin once more, and that the hot burning pain on the top of my head, which had begun to subside during that momentary repose I had enjoyed up by the White Thorn, was returning with redoubled violence.

The sudden glare of the strong sunlight as I emerged from the dark shade of the thicket almost blinded me. I felt the rush of blood to my head, and every object seemed to dance before my eyes, so that I could scarcely steady my pace sufficiently to draw near to the group towards which my companion was hurrying. At the bottom of the hollow runs a long narrow gorge —always moist and damp, always soft and green. In this space was gathered a knot of gentlemen busily engaged in some hot dispute, as I inferred from the murmur of their voices, which seemed sharp and angry, and from the exuberance of gesture with which the conversation was being carried on. No sooner had my conductor joined them than they all simultaneously turned to me, and as the group opened I beheld, with horror and amazement, a human form stretched out upon the grass, the head supported by a stone, and the blood pouring from a wound in the throat, so rapidly that its crimson stream had dyed the grass and flowers all around. As I approached I recognised at once in the young man who lay before me, and whose life-blood was ebbing away with such fearful speed, the youth who had been my companion on my ill-starred journey from Clamart. Not one of the individuals present appeared to remember for a moment the awful presence of the dead. All seemed under the influence of some personal fear; two of the party appeared to be engaged in discussion, pointing in various directions, as if in difference of opinion concerning the route they were to follow. One of the gentlemen, in his shirt-sleeves, was bending low to wash his hands in the little spring. I alone knelt down by the corpse, and laid my hand upon the heart to see if it were beating still; but no pulsation was perceptible. The youth lay there with his face turned upwards to the sky, his eyeballs glistening through the half-closed lids, his lips wide apart, just as he had appeared before me reclining in the coucou scarcely more than an hour ago. I felt as if in a hideous dream, from which the questioning and peremptory suggestions of the party, all uttered at once, and all demanding a reply, had scarcely power to arouse me. The man in his shirt-sleeves, having finished his ablutions, turned towards me his pale, guilty countenance, and, perhaps in answer to my inquiring gaze, began to exculpate himself before he was accused. He said that he had intended to give his adversary but a slight wound, in order to teach him to be more guarded in his language for the future, and not to call a man "a cheat and sharper" because the run of luck happened to be in his favour; but the turf was slippery, and before he could recover himself, he had slipped forward, and the point of his sword being raised at that moment, it had entered his adversary's neck, and the blood had gushed out with such sudden violence that the youth, uttering but one shriek, had fallen lifeless on the grass.

"Ay, but all that will never be listened to by the Procureur Imperial," said one of his companions, hurriedly. "Lose no time, I advise you, in talking, but get away at once." Then turning to me he added: "This duel, lawful and loyal as it in reality is, wears an ugly aspect, monsieur. By an unfortunate accident, the doctor who was to have accompanied the party was left behind, when the coach which bore the unfortunate victim in this affair broke down in the wood; then, the only second on his side happens to be Bras-de-Fer, the fencing-master, with whom he has been in training, and who must have been aware how little he was fitted to cope with Monsieur de Marsiac, the most skilful swordsman in all Paris. Then again the quarrel took place at the gaming-table, where the victor in this combat was the winner of a tremendous sum from the young man he has killed—as he declares—by accident. In short, we must be off at once, ere people are abroad, or we shall have the gensdarmes about our ears, and we shall none of us escape easily under such circumstances."

"Come along, De Ferville," exclaimed the individual in his shirt-sleeves, who had been the murderer, for as such I looked upon him, of the poor youth who lay dead at my feet. "We have scarcely time to catch the train, and we have then to get to the Gare du Nord for the Brussels railway. This young gentleman will best know what to do. He will only have to go at once to the commissaire and declare to the loyalty of the fight in which our adversary has fallen. The body must not

be left alone, or it would look like——" He hesitated for a word, but finding none but the right one, spoke it out boldly —"murder!" He had been hurrying on his paletôt the while, and tying on his cravat, and when this was completed he walked with a quick pace down the gorge, and his form was lost amid the hanging wood of the opposite bank. His two companions followed quickly, and soon the fencing-master and myself were left standing alone beside the corpse.

"I, too, must go and hide," murmured Bras-de-Fer; "but whither? I have no means to fly to Brussels like these young sparks. Ah, that De Marsiac! who shall ever tell whether it was luck or intention which made his sword fly upwards at the first lunge? Had the boy but had time to give that thrust which I had been at so much pains to teach him, it would have been, not himself, but De Marsiac who would be lying here!"

All the while he had been speaking he had been gathering up the two long weapons which lay half-buried amongst the grass. And, after wiping them carefully upon the silk handkerchief in which they had been enveloped, and looking down the blades with a scrutiny that made me shudder, he replaced them in the green-baize bag, which all this while hung suspended on his arm. Then, as if suddenly remembering my presence, he said, looking over his shoulder as he departed:

"You cannot bear witness to much, my friend; but you can say with truth that *I* had chosen the open space beneath the Three Acacias for this encounter, but De Marsiac declared that the sun was already too powerful up there, and so we drew lots for the choice of this spot or the other. Of course, De Marsiac had the luck—he always has. He knew well enough he could not have 'slipped' so as to have thrust the point of his sword through his adversary's throat up at the Three Acacias: the ground is dry and gravelly there, not soft and slippery as it is in the gorge."

With this dark and terrible hint, he too disappeared, leaving me face to face with the dead. I could not turn away without giving one last look upon those poor, pale features and that stiffening form; and then I thought it would be cruel and unmanly to leave him thus exposed to the chance of injury from sun, from air—from insects—and summoning all my courage, I approached, and seizing the long silk neckerchief the youth had taken off before the combat, and which was hanging on a branch just above his head, I stooped down to cover his face from the glare of day. As I did so, a faint buzzing noise smote my ear with as great a shock as though a cannon-ball had been fired close beside me, and the next moment the sensation of some crawling object beneath my fingers renewed the terror and loathing I had felt before! The accursed blue-bottle fly was still hovering there, and, coward that I was, I durst not raise the kerchief to drive it away, but fled without turning to look again, and rushed with desperate haste towards Meudon.

It was well for me that the hour was still so early, or I should have had the whole of Meudon at my heels, as I tore like a madman down the narrow, ill-paved street to the residence of the commissaire. I had anticipated some difficulty in obtaining an audience at that unusual time; but the clerk in waiting received me readily. He scented a crime, and hurried me into the commissaire's private room to await his honour's pleasure. The commissaire, in dressing-gown and slippers, listened to my explanation of the business which had brought me there with evident impatience, for my manner was so wild and incoherent that he could scarcely be expected to place confidence in my statement, and when the procès verbal had been made out according to my deposition, he merely nodded his head and said, "We shall see, mon garçon," and disappeared to his café au lait, the aromatic steam of which pervaded the whole place; but, as he retired, I saw him make a sign to the gendarme, and point to my shoulder. And the latter, with the instinct of his calling, must have understood, for, as he followed the commissaire out, I heard him turn the key in the lock in order to secure me safely. The tumult of my soul can hardly be conceived, as I was left alone in that large, dreary room. I paced to and fro in the restlessness of despair, and as I passed by the looking-glass which hung in front of his honour's bureau, I could scarcely believe that the wild and haggard countenance I beheld reflected there was the same as that which had greeted my sight in the little mirror opposite the window of my mansarde at early dawn on that very same morning. My hair was all on end, my cheeks of ashy paleness, and my lips parched and cracked. My blouse, all torn and ragged with my forced passage through the brambles, seemed to hang loosely, all out of shape, upon my sunken figure, and—great God! what was that stain upon my sleeve? Ah, yes, I remembered that Bras-de-Fer had clutched

my arm as we slid together down the steep bank into the hollow. This was the precise spot where the fly had alighted, when I had sought to seize him in the coucou; the superstition had found its ample fulfilment there, and this was evidently the testimony which had risen against me to make the gendarme lock me in on a sign from the commissaire.

The minutes seemed hours as I paced the floor. I tried to divert my thoughts by gazing through the iron grating of the window looking into the garden; but close beneath lay a bed of scarlet verbena, and my eyes blinked and my soul sickened at the colour; and over it the bees were hovering with unceasing hum, and my ears could not bear the sound. It made me shudder as if with cold, while my brain seemed on fire.

At length the sound of footsteps slowly approaching gave a turn to my thoughts; the peculiar tread which denotes the bearing of a heavy load, the low murmur of the crowd, and the scuffling of many feet, announced that the errand of death was completed, and the corpse brought into the office yard.

I need not trouble you with the tale of the tedious process of the law, the endless questioning and examination. The legal persecution ended in my entire acquittal of all participation in the death of the young Count de Sorgerac, for such the letters and papers found on the deceased proved him to be, and as his watch and chain, and the rings upon his fingers, remained untouched, I was allowed to go free, with the sole obligation of appearing as witness against the criminals, for whose arrest a warrant was immediately made out. My portfolio and drawings, my colour-box and tin case, were all deposited at the greffe, so that I went forth from the office lightened of the burden which I had began to feel wearisome, but borne down by a strange and ponderous weight ten times more painful to bear, a load which seemed to be crushing me to the very earth. As I passed out from the commissaire's bureau I turned my anxious gaze towards the out-house where I knew that the dead body had been laid. A heavy padlock was on the door, and a gendarme was standing by to prevent the approach of idlers seeking to peep through the crannies of the ill-joined planks; but I knew well enough that neither bolt nor bar could exclude the deadly foe, now endowed by my diseased imagination with a superstitious terror, and I was weak and foolish enough to close my eyes and stop my ears as I hurried by, lest I should obtain physical evidence of the presence of what I dreaded more than any other living thing upon this earth—the bluebottle fly!

AN HOUR OF AGONY.

Has the reader ever had a tussle with a Bengal tiger in full vigour and appetite? Has it chanced him to be in a balloon when perforated by Prussian bullets? Has it occurred to him to have been indulging a commendable curiosity in the remoter recesses of a coal-mine, when an explosion suddenly severed the connexion between himself and the world without? These are forms of uneasiness not to be lightly treated of. They shrink into nothing beside that supreme commingling of grief, astonishment, and horror it was my lot to experience on a certain never-to-be-forgotten evening of January, 'forty-nine.

Time's soothing influence has wrought its accustomed effect. All bitterness, all self-reproach, have died gradually away. In place of that mental tumult which, for a long period, attended the remembrance of the incident in question, I now find myself able to narrate with indifference, nay, even with a smile, the circumstance to which, but recently, my most intimate friends durst hardly hazard an allusion.

The Guild of Lumpeters represents one of the most ancient and honoured of London's civic institutions. What they are, *why* they are, I have not the remotest idea. Enough that, on a certain day in November, they are seen in their glory, their banners brighter, their bands brassier, their knights more corpulent, themselves sleeker an more redolent of wealth than any of their prosperous rivals. They have a hall solely, it would seem, for purposes of hospitality. They give dinners of inconceivable succulency and toothsomeness. They invite mayors, nay, kings, who don't always come, and princes, who generally do, and they also invite *me*. I go, for I like them. All the Lumpeters of my acquaintance are noble, large-hearted men, citizen gentlemen, on whom London, in need of arm or purse, might confidently rely. I think if I were other than what I am, I would be a Lumpeter.

Pretexts were never wanting for a Lumpeter feed. The recovery of the chief city magistrate from a bilious attack, the breaking up of the frost, the birth of a son and heir to the Ban of Croatia, the arrival of a piebald elephant at the gardens of the

Zoological Society, such were among the events I could recal as having suggested feastful rejoicings. But that to which I have now to refer was to be regarded as a private and peculiar gathering, almost, in point of fact, a corporate family-feed, comprising no more than ninety-five guests, selected with discrimination, for the purpose of testing the merits of a new head-cook. Thus it had rather the nature of a grave and dispassionate deliberation than of a dinner, a certain sense of responsibility toning down the exuberant mirth that usually waited on these pleasant assemblies.

There were to be no speeches, no music. The usual loyal toasts, no more. Above all, no ladies. The presence of beauty, chatting in the gallery, might haply distract the attention of the weaker brethren from the great object of the meeting.

The Lumpeters were particular—and a thought conservative—in matters of attire. They themselves, to a man, adhered to the fashion, moribund, but not defunct, of ankle-buttoned pantaloons, figured-silk stockings, buckled shoes, expansive white waistcoats, and the mighty cravat patronised by his late majesty, the fourth George. It was well understood that the adoption of a similar costume on the part of their guests would be interpreted by Lumpeters as the most delicate return that could be offered for their hospitality. I, myself, invariably sported the fancy dress in question.

On the eventful day I have mentioned, it happened that I had been detained at chambers later than usual, and on reaching home had barely time to dress. While doing so, I received an anxious message from a friend who was to have accompanied me to the banquet, but who, being late, and himself a stranger to the guild, begged me to secure for him a seat next my own.

With increased expedition I finished my toilet, and the dining-hall being but five minutes' walk from my residence, I quickly buttoned on a pair of rough overalls, threw on my cloak, and hurried to the spot.

To my astonishment, a crowd, dense and still augmenting, was gathered about the door. It was only through the aid of a friendly policeman that I was enabled to make my way. "What was the matter?" I inquired of Number Nineteen B. The answer, half drowned in the clatter of arriving carriages, sounded something like "furrin swell." "Who?" Number Nineteen forbore to trust his lips with the name; but it were him as kills the wild beastesses out in Afrikey. It was a more intelligent porter who presently announced to me that the renowned French lion-slayer, the Baron Bobadil de Bête-Fauve, had, at the last moment, accepted an invitation to dine at Lumpeters' Hall.

The character of the assembly had undergone a change. Not only had a little reinforcement of a hundred and twenty guests been hastily invited, but a dense mass of spectators lined the hall, the passages, and the ante-chamber, and even frothed over into the banqueting-room itself, the spacious gallery of which was already filled with ladies, whom the chivalrous guild had found it impossible to dream of excluding.

I was late; but dinner had been deferred half an hour. There would be just time to rush into the room, secure my friend's seat, and then deposit my cloak and overalls in the room devoted to such purposes.

The former matter was quickly arranged, and I was darting back, when I was met by a rush and pressure that almost forced me behind an adjacent screen. The Baron de Bête-Fauve had arrived, and was being triumphantly marched into the hall.

The Baron Bobadil de Bête-Fauve, when visible, proved to be a remarkably small gentleman, with intensely black eyes and moustaches, the latter curling fiercely up almost into the former; but my own situation demanded all my attention. Withdraw I could not. To sit down in that highly-attired society in light brown overalls, such as might be worn by a stable-man, was not to be thought of. Ah! an idea. Just within the door, near the wall, but with space to get behind it, stood the large screen against which I had been pressed. Capturing a waiter, I drew him with me into that friendly shelter.

"Here, help, my man. Can't get back. Just let me slip off these confounded—hurry, now——" I gasped, and tore the buttons loose with lightning speed.

"All right, sir."

The waiter was as quick as I, and scarcely gave me time to disengage the last button, before he caught away the garment, and bundling it up, vanished in the crowd.

"Eh! hillo! stop, you! Good Hea——no—it's impossible! And yet—mercy on us—what shall I do?"

A horrible fact had revealed itself. In making my hurried toilet, I had actually buttoned on my overalls—omitting my black dress-pantaloons!

What was to become of me? Garments, indeed, were there—garments even too ample and obtrusive. I had worn while dressing a pair of wide but shortish trousers once used in a Chinese burlesque, written

by my friend Skelton for the delectation of a private circle, and which, being intended for that occasion only, were adorned with devices grotesque and terror-striking, represented in colours crimson, green, and blue. And these abominable trousers I had brought with me to Lumpeter's Hall!

A chill shot through me as I realised the full extent of the misadventure. I staggered back faintly against the wall, and endeavoured to collect myself. Glancing round the corner of the screen, I observed, with a shudder, that the company were taking their places, while the ladies in the gallery had risen, en masse, and were directing so concentrated a fire of eyes upon the entrance, where the valiant lion-queller had paused to return the salute that greeted him, that to escape had become impossible. I must remain where I was, till able to concert with some compassionate attendant a plan of escape.

There was the settling murmur and buzz, the "Gentlemen, pray silence. For grace!" and the "Stand still, waiters!" in a voice of authority. Grace followed, and the noise of feasting; but the next intelligible words froze my very soul.

"Remove that screen!"

Instinctively I clutched and held it back. There came a violent tug; but there was too much at stake for a feeble defence, and I held on with desperate tenacity.

"Quick, now, with that screen!" said the voice of authority. "What's the matter?"

"There's a gent, be'ind, a-'olding of it back," said some officious booby.

"Here—you!" I gasped. "Five shillings! Ten! Twenty! Five pounds! Fetch—brown overalls! Forgot trou—— Let the screen alone, can't ye?"

"Bless my 'eart, sir! 'Ere *is* a go!" said a waiter, grinning, but compassionate, for he had recognised me, even thus.

"Take that thing out of the way!" roared the voice of authority.

"Must do it, sir," explained the waiter. "The heatables can't come by. Stop! There's a vacant seat. 'Taint three steps off."

"That's mine," I groaned.

"'Ow lucky! Now just you slip into it as I shifts the screen, so's to purtect you. Tuck the table-kiver well into your weskit, and nobody'll be the wiser. One, two, three. Hoff you go!"

Off it was necessary to go, for he caught away my defences, but extended the folding arms of the screen, so as nearly to touch the vacant seat. In that instant, *how* I hardly knew, I found myself fairly seated at the board, the friend who should have accompanied me at my side.

"You take it coolly, old fellow," remarked the latter. "I fancied that at these dinners punctuality——"

"I take it coolly, *very* coolly," I replied. "And it is for your sake I am doing so. May I ask you to spare me as much adjacent table-cloth as is compatible with your personal convenience?"

"Table-cloth! Assuredly. But why?"

"There are reasons, hidden reasons. But of that hereafter. A glass of wine?"

"My friend is agitated. His manly fingers quiver. Something is amiss with Charteris," remarked my companion, in the sepulchral tone he is given to use when chaffing those he loves.

Dicky Skelton, who never, so far as it is ascertained, had a relative in the world, dresses always in the deepest mourning. He never laughs, outwardly. He is mirth itself, within. He has written burlesques by the score. To Skelton is due the evisceration of words that have baffled the skill of the most accomplished tormentors of the English language.

"My friend, confide in me," continued Dick, smacking his lips, for the Lumpeter Burgundy is not to be tasted every day. "You are ill at ease."

"At the knees. A trifle."

"To remember one's troubles in such a scene is weak."

"To forget one's trousers is madness," I whispered, with clenched teeth, in his ear.

"One's——!" ejaculated Skelton, faintly, as he turned upon me a countenance naturally wan and lengthy, but now whitened and elongated with real alarm. "You—don't mean—— Do I distinctly understand——?"

"You understand my reason for requiring as large a portion of the table-cloth as you can conveniently spare."

"Now this is very noteworthy, yes, it is really curious," remarked Mr. Skelton, with more interest than sympathy. "I do not remember having ever met with a precisely similar situation. A man may, indeed, forget an essential garment. The mind cannot always be dwelling on these outward things. But has he no friend? Wife, servant, grandmother? Is there no hand to bar his exit, no tongue to say, 'My dear, my very dear sir, return, reflect. Consult, if not prevailing fashions, at least that warmth and comfort as needful to man as his daily food?' Did none do this?"

I shook my head, and briefly recounted the cause and manner of my misfortune.

My friend gazed at me sorrowfully:

"So fair above!" he murmured. "So—well, so singular below! Who now, in this brilliant assembly—graced, as I perceive, with the presence of many beautiful (and giggling) women—would imagine that you, sitting here so well got up, radiant with artificial mirth, are a type of Milton's Sin?"

I replied, curtly, that I accepted the situation, as he was pleased to term it, with the calmness that seemed expedient, and that having done all that man could do, I awaited the decrees of fate, and the arrival of the waiter, to whom I had offered a sovereign to smuggle in my overalls, at the first opportune moment.

"Awfully lucky for you, my boy, there's to be no speech-making!" continued Skelton. "We would have had you on your defenceless legs in no time."

"Have you seen the toast-list, gentlemen?" asked a portly member of the guild, on my left, as he politely offered a card.

There was a catalogue of at least twenty toasts, with names appended as proposers; and, as proposing that of the guest of the evening, the Baron de Bête-Fauve, "Mr. Reginald Charteris!"

At the same moment a note was placed in my hand. It was from the chairman.

"Oblige us. We know your ready eloquence. Baron struck with your face and manner. Wishes to hear you speak. Touch up the *lions*."

Snatching out my pencil-case I wrote: "Throat impracticable. Uvula cut off this morning. Should create more astonishment than interest if forced upon my legs."

I breathed. That peril was averted. My spirits rose as the merry feast proceeded, and I began to see more distinctly the humorous side of my little misadventure. The atmosphere was warm and pleasant. Why, I had been present at many a dinner in the north where men dined, from preference, without their—that is, in kilts. True, I had not exactly a kilt; but, even were I compelled to stand forth from my present retirement, the exhibition of knee, the publication of calf, would be no greater than is legally sanctioned within five hundred miles of this spot.

Ha! a sensation. "Pray silence," &c. Grace. "Non nobis." Then the usual loyal toasts, and we drank prosperity to several collateral branches of the reigning house (the Lumpeters were nothing if not loyal), before we arrived at the great toast of the evening—the Baron de Bête-Fauve. This was given by the chairman himself; and, with the baron's reply (in French), and counter-proposition of the health of the ladies, was received with the greatest enthusiasm.

The excitement was just settling down, when——

"Hallo!" exclaimed Skelton, "what's up, now? Is any one expected, I wonder? They are putting a big velvet chair next to Bête-Fauve. It must be a swell. Can the Prince of——"

"So long as it is not intended for my humble person," I replied, with an easy smile, "I am perfectly——"

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Charteris," said the voice of the head-steward, who, followed by two attendant waiters, had approached us unobserved. "The chair, sir, presents his compliments, and begs you will do him and the Baron de Bête-Fauve the favour to occupy the seat that has been placed for you between them."

My heart stood still. My hair rose. A chill of horror shot through me.

"The baron, sir, speaks no English, and though him and the chair has been hard at it all dinner, neither of 'em has understood a word," said the steward, confidentially. "The chair, sir, and the company generally," added Mr. Feastful, with poetic exaggeration, "would 'ail with pleasure the spectacle of your introduction to the baron."

"The baron be——" I know not what I was about to say. My voice faltered. I had caught a glimpse of the fair occupants of the gallery, leaning over the balustrade in their eagerness to examine the favoured individual for whom the chair of state had been so ostentatiously prepared, and a vision of myself marching up the hall, clad in my abominable burlesque Chinese trousers, the mark of every eye, almost made me reel in my chair.

I shuddered, strove to speak, conceived a wild thought of diving under the table, when, whish! with a lurid, fitful swirl, out went the enormous lustre, with all the minor lights following suit. We were in total darkness.

I will not describe the confusion that succeeded, the screams of laughter from the gallery, the scramble and the crash below. Torches gleamed in the doorways almost before we knew what had happened, and the accident that had occasioned the sudden extinction of our light was remedied within a few minutes.

But, when order was restored, one chair stood vacant at that hospitable board! Whether its occupant had been trampled

under foot in the disorder, or had vanished with the light, was never known. My private opinion is that, while anxious inquiries were being made in the Lumpeters' Hall, the missing gentleman was warming his legs at his domestic hearth, sipping his grog, and smiling at the peril he had so narrowly escaped.

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER V. THE NEXT DAY.

Mr. Drage, smoking a sedative pipe in the rectory garden after breakfast the next morning, pondering over his strange interview with Philip Vane, and wondering when and how he should hear of its result, was startled from his reverie by the clanging of the bell, and looking up saw Mrs. Pickering at the gate. This visit was not unexpected, nor, truth to tell, had it been contemplated without alarm. The rector felt tolerably certain that Mrs. Pickering would come to tell him how matters had progressed at Wheatcroft, during the stay of the strangers from London; but it was by no means certain that he himself might not have been seen in colloquy with Vane by some of the servants on the premises, or even by the housekeeper herself, and that the reason for and the result of that colloquy might be demanded of him. To be sure, he argued with himself, he had informed Mrs. Pickering of his determination of some time or other seeking an interview with her husband on her behalf, and had obtained her consent, however unwilling it was given; but he confessed to himself that Mrs. Pickering had looked upon his declared intention of seeking that interview as vague and remote, and would probably resent his having availed himself of the first opportunity which presented itself without further communication with her on the subject.

There, however, she was at the garden gate, and, whatever happened, she must not be kept waiting. So Mr. Drage hurried down the path and gave her admittance, bidding her good morning, with that strange mixture of earnestness and nervousness which always characterised his communications with Mrs. Pickering.

"Well, now tell me about your guests," said he, after the ordinary salutation. "They arrived according to promise. They stayed with you, and——"

"And are gone," said Madge. They went off by the express this morning, to my intense relief; for I felt bound, fettered, and as though I could scarcely breathe, while they were in the house."

"You carried out your intention of asking Sir Geoffry to allow you to keep your room?"

"Yes; he accorded it at once, and nothing could have worked better. Mr. Vane and his friend were in the house nearly four-and-twenty hours, and during the whole of that time they neither of them caught sight of me."

"The other man might have seen you without any danger to yourself, I suppose?"

"I am not so sure of that. This Mr. Delabole is a man who followed us one day from the theatre at Wexeter, and seemed to take particular notice of us. By the way, what could have brought him to Wexeter at that time, I wonder? It was certainly the same man; I recognised his figure."

"Indeed! Then, though unseen yourself, you managed to see them?"

"Scarcely to see them. Some time after dinner, when it was quite dusk, they went into the garden to smoke, and strolled up and down the little side path leading to the stables, which is immediately under my window. My attention was attracted to them by hearing Philip's well-remembered short sarcastic laugh. Then I peered out cautiously once or twice, and perceived them moving about in the gloom. There was not light enough for me to see their features, but I recognised the other man's square, thick-set figure, and Philip's swinging walk."

"You heard Mr. Vane laugh?" asked the rector, somewhat anxiously. "He must have been amused; I conclude things must have been going well."

"It was by no means that kind of laugh," replied Madge, "but one which I have heard too often not to recognise its meaning—short, hard, and sarcastic. Besides, though I could not distinguish the words they uttered, I could hear the tone in which they spoke, and my impression was that they were using anything but pleasant language to each other."

"That looks as though they had not been able to carry through the business which brought them down here," said the rector.

"I do not fancy matters went quite as smoothly as they anticipated," said Madge. "I spoke to Sir Geoffry just before coming out. He told me he had informed those gentlemen that he was not prepared to give

them a final and decisive answer at once, but that he would write to them in the course of a few days."

"Deliberation on such a matter in a man of Sir Geoffry's temperament does not argue well for the success of those speculating gentry," said the rector. "One would scarcely imagine that a man by nature so impulsive would be inclined to deliberate over even matters of business."

"I think that in this instance, at all events, the result of his deliberations will be to prohibit his friend from embarking in the project which Mr. Vane and his companion came here to advocate," said Madge. "I cannot tell you by what means, but a curious piece of information relative to this very affair has fallen into my hands. I shall lay it before Sir Geoffry prior to his writing his decision, and I have no doubt of the way in which it will influence him."

"I hope there is no chance of—of your husband hearing of the part which you propose to take in this matter?" said the rector, nervously.

"Not the least chance in the world, I should imagine," said Madge. "But suppose he were to hear of it, what then?"

"It might induce him to be more bitter against you."

"Nothing could render him more bitter against me than the knowledge—if he ever acquired it—that I had explained to his future wife the impossibility of his legal marriage with her."

"No, but—suppose he should give up that project and repent, the knowledge of this interference on your part might aggravate him against you, and prevent his doing the justice which he otherwise would."

"Give up that project and repent! Philip Vane repenting and doing justice! My dear Mr. Drage, what can you be thinking of? You have only heard of Mr. Vane through me; and either my descriptive or your appreciative powers must be poor indeed, if you could think that such a man could be led to give up any project from which he is to derive great benefit and comfort. However, we need not discuss this matter any further; there cannot be the slightest implied connexion between me and the answer which Sir Geoffry will send on this matter of business. As Mr. Vane has passed twenty-four hours under the same roof with me in complete ignorance of my proximity, he cannot imagine me to be in collusion with his opponent; and even if Mrs. Bendixen were to tell him of my visit to her, she could not give him any clue to my abode."

Mr. Drage said no more. He felt quite certain that if Philip Vane were to hear of his wife's interference in his business project, all hopes of the repentance and reformation which his last words seemed to convey were at an end. And Mr. Drage believed in the possibility of his arguments having produced a salutary effect. "The man's manner was so real," he said to himself. "He was evidently touched."

Meanwhile Madge, making the best of her way home, was wondering what the rector could have meant by his allusion to the possibility of Philip Vane's being induced, by any means other than threatened exposure, to give up the project on which his heart was fixed. Although Mr. Drage had talked vaguely about seeking an interview in which he would warn Philip of the iniquity of the course he was pursuing, and of the danger which awaited him if he persisted in it, Madge had no notion that the quiet, nervous invalid would have had the courage to carry his plan into effect. What he had said arose from that simplicity and want of knowledge of the world, which she had often remarked in him. Madge did not rightly estimate the depth of the mine of love in that honest heart. Since the time when she had told him of the impossibility of her ever being more to him than a friend, the rector had carefully abstained from any exhibition of his feeling for her, and she imagined that it had died away, or at least had given place to that merely brotherly regard which she was able and willing to accept.

When she reached Wheatcroft she found Sir Geoffry engaged in his favourite occupation of superintending the gardeners, and driving them to desperation by the conflicting suggestions which he made, and impossible orders which he desired carried out. The old general looked up as she approached, and at once advanced to meet her.

"Good morning, Mrs. Pickering," he said. "You were early astir this morning. I went to your room after breakfast, but found you already flown. So I came out here to give a few directions as to the manner in which I wish this compound laid out by next summer. There is nothing which refreshes me so much after muddling my head with complicated details of business, as to undertake a little landscape gardening, in which, I flatter myself, I have excellent taste."

Madge, to whom the gardeners were constantly appealing when hopelessly involved by their master's contradictory in-

structions, thought it better not to touch upon the latter portion of this speech, so she said: "And your business matters are now, I trust, satisfactorily disposed of, Sir Geoffry?"

"I hope so—I think so. I have pretty well made up my mind upon the course which I shall recommend to Mr. Irving, though I have not written either to him or to those gentlemen who have just left us."

"And that course is—— ?"

"To decline to have anything to do with the affair."

"I am glad of that," said Madge, earnestly, "I am very glad of that!"

"Indeed!" said the old general, looking at her knowingly. "Is your knowledge of the Terra del Fuegos Mining Company somewhat greater than that merely obtainable from my casual mention of it, or from reading out to me the variation in its shares as reported in the City article?"

"My knowledge of the Company is absolutely nil," said Madge, quietly, "but I am glad to find that you are going to dissuade your friend from entering what might prove at least a questionable speculation. Mr. Irving is a very rich man, I have heard you say, and no longer a young one. It is better in his old age that he should keep his riches—and his friends."

"Very neatly put, Mrs. Pickering," said Sir Geoffry, with a laugh, "though I do not think Alec Irving would be likely to break with me, even though he lost money by following my advice. Our intimacy is of too long standing, and my recommendations hitherto have proved too successful for him to dream of that. However, in this matter there was a very large sum of money involved, and, as you say, it is better for him to keep what he has. There is nothing that one grows so fond of as wealth; a poorer man would stand the loss with far more equanimity."

"Your recent guests will not be pleased at your decision," said Madge, watching him attentively.

"Then they must be displeased, my dear Mrs. Pickering," said the general. "I have treated them with every courtesy and given them all they wanted, except my friend's money. And at one time, by Jove, they were very nearly getting that."

"They pleaded their cause well, then?"

"They did, indeed. So well, that if I had not happily induced them to let me have the papers last night—I sat up reading them until daybreak, and am horribly fatigued in consequence—they would probably have succeeded in inducing me to recommend their venture to Irving's consideration. They are two remarkably clever fellows; the younger man especially Mr. Vane argued with immense apparent earnestness, and was wonderfully ready with his replies to all my objections."

"And you think they will accept your letter as a final decision?"

"I do not say that! The stake is too large for them to give up all hope of winning it without a further effort. I should not be surprised if one of them, probably Mr. Vane, were to come down here again with more persuasive talk and more promising documents; but it will be useless, my mind is made up."

"He surely would not come without apprising you?" asked Madge, in agitation.

"And even were he to do so," said the general, with a smile, "your arrangements for the domestic comforts of this house are always so complete, my dear Mrs. Pickering, that we could risk being taken unawares."

"Oh, yes of course, everything could be made ready for a visitor in a very few moments. It was scarcely with that idea that I asked. However," added Madge, disjointedly, "that will do when Mr. Vane arrives. Now, if you do not require me further, Sir Geoffry, I have my duties to attend to."

"Very strange woman that," muttered the old general. "What has upset her, I wonder! She can't have been speculating with her savings, and investing in this mine? Of course not. It must be that she did not like being taken aback, and wanted everything proper and orderly by any unexpected arrival. She's not without pride either, as she proved by begging to be allowed to keep out of sight during the time of those fellows' visit. Didn't like to be recognised as the housekeeper, I suppose. Strange that, and unlike her way in general. But all women are strange, I have noticed, and the less one has to do with them the better."

The housekeeping duties which had formed Madge's excuse for quitting the general did not immediately engross her attention. She went straight to her sitting-room in anything but a peaceful frame of mind, and threw herself into a chair to cogitate over the announcement which had been just made to her. From what Sir Geoffry had said, there was a chance that on any day, without warning, Philip Vane might come down to Wheatcroft to pass another twenty-four hours as a guest be-

neath its roof. In that case she would have no opportunity of taking the precaution to absent herself, or to secure herself against all chances of being accidentally brought into his presence. And there was every probability of their meeting face to face, and meeting under circumstances which would preclude any explanation on her part of how she happened to be there. She had noticed that Sir Geoffry had been scanning her curiously during the whole of their recent conversation, and she feared that if she were again to request permission to remain in seclusion during the visitors' stay, his evident suspicion might take some more definite shape. She must for the present, she thought, leave her actions to be decided by the circumstances as they arose. Her tact, her luck, let it be called what it might, had never deserted her yet, and she would trust to its promptings on the emergency.

As she rose from her seat, she was surprised at the sight of a letter lying on the table. She had been away from the house at the time of the postman's arrival, and on her first return to her room her mind had been too much occupied to allow her to think of anything but the subject which immediately engrossed her attention.

The letter was from Rose. Madge recognised that at once by its shape and size, though on taking it up she noticed that the handwriting, usually so round and clerkly, was tremulous and hurried. The word "immediate," twice underscored, was also on the superscription, so that Madge, alarmed, hurriedly broke open the envelope, and fearing that her sister was ill or unhappy, hurried through the contents. They were as follows:

DEAREST MADGE,—I don't mind telling you that I was a good deal annoyed when I received your answer to my last, saying that you could not either meet me at some nice seaside place as I proposed, where we might spend my holiday together, or that you would not allow me to come down to Springside and see as much of you as you could manage. I was annoyed, dear, because I have been for ever such a time longing to be with you, and to talk to you, and because it seemed so hard that you should merely tell me "you could not," and "you could not," without going into any explanation. I know you think that my stock of common sense is not very large, and I myself am ready to admit the fact, only I don't like having it pointed out to me quite so plainly.

However, I know that everything you do always somehow turns out for the best, and so it happened in this instance. If I had come away from London, as I proposed to do, I might not have heard something—two things really—which may be of the very greatest importance to me—I mean to us. When I say "us," of course you will understand, from what I wrote to you in my last letter, that I mean to Gerald and myself! Oh, Madge! I can scarcely tell you the extraordinary things that have happened, the wonderful discovery which I have made. I don't know exactly how to begin to tell it; I know that properly I ought to keep my great secret for the last, but then, perhaps, you wouldn't have patience to read so far, so that I had better blurt it out at once.

Well, then, you must know that the old gentleman in whose house you are living, your master I suppose I must call him—don't be annoyed, Madge, you know I wouldn't pain you, but I am so bad at explaining these things — Sir Geoffry Heriot, that is the best way to put it, is Gerald's father. Fancy that, Madge; fancy your living in the same house with that old man, seeing him every day, ordering his dinner, and that kind of thing, and not having the least idea that he was Gerald's father. He seems to be a very horrid old person, with a most abominable temper. Not that Gerald will allow this for a moment, but I am sure it must be so from what he tells me about him. You know, Madge, we always fancied at Wexeter that Gerald was a gentleman's son, and that he had run away from home, and this appears to be the case. When he was quite a lad, just before he came to old Dobson's theatre, he had a terrible quarrel with his father, who treated him most shamefully, and turned him out of the house. I do not quite understand what the quarrel was about, but I am certain Gerald was in the right.

The one thing which I remember in this story is, that Sir Geoffry had quarrelled with his wife as well as his son, and was infuriated against Gerald because he took his mother's part. It seems that Sir Geoffry, in early life, brought some terrible accusation against his wife, an accusation which Gerald, when he heard of it, imagined to be false, and was determined to disprove. He intended to devote all his time to solving this mystery, but he had his living to get, poor fellow! He had scarcely any leisure when at Wexeter, and what he had, he said, he employed in a different way. Why did Gerald blush

when he said that, Madge? I don't think he was in love with me when we were in Miss Cave's lodgings; but he did blush, and looked quite strange when he mentioned it.

However, he did find it out; and now comes the extraordinary part of the story. He discovered that his father had been deceived, and had acted with the greatest injustice towards his mother; and in his old impulsive way, which I dare say you will recollect, Madge, he determined on starting off at once to see Sir Geoffry, and to lay before him the facts which he had learned. And he went! Without saying a word to me he hurried off to Springside, and actually made his way to Wheatcroft. Fancy that, Madge! Fancy Gerald being actually in the same house with you, and neither of you knowing anything about it. Of course I didn't then know who his father was; he only took me into his confidence on his return, or I should have told him about your being there.

It seems to have been a dreadful business, Madge. Sir Geoffry flew into a towering passion directly he saw him. Would not listen to a word he had to say, and actually ordered the servant to turn him out of the house. It seems too dreadful to think of, after all Gerald's patience and suffering, to receive such cruel treatment from his own father! It was an awful shock to him. Since his return he seems quite a changed man. He has lost all that fire and energy which I dare say you will remember as characteristic of him, and does nothing but brood over the wrongs he has received. More keenly than anything he seems to feel the injustice which Sir Geoffry does him in suspecting that he had merely invented the discovery of his mother's innocence as a means to restore himself to his old position and his father's favour. If Sir Geoffry could only be brought to acknowledge how wrong that suspicion is, I am sure that half Gerald's misery would disappear.

And Sir Geoffry must be brought to acknowledge it, and a reconciliation must be effected between father and son, and, what is more, all this must be done by you, Madge! Yes, by you! I have not told Gerald one word about your being at Wheatcroft; I thought it better not. So that whatever is done will come upon him as a surprise. I will not attempt for an instant to suggest what you should do. Your clear head and common sense are sure to prompt the proper course, but the result must be, Sir Geoffry's acceptance of his wife's innocence, and Gerald's restoration to his home.

You can do this, Madge, and I know you will! You would have exerted yourself in any case, but you will exert yourself more than ever now, for one reason which I have kept till the last. I told you that I was madly in love with Gerald, but that he did not make love to me. Now, Madge, he has asked me to be his wife. He first spoke to me before that dreadful visit to Wheatcroft. Since his return he has asked me again. He wishes us to be married, he said, and to commence our new life in some foreign country. But I would not have him go away while matters remain as they are between him and his father. Now you see the importance of the task I have intrusted to you, and you will throw your whole heart into it, I know.

Your loving
ROSE.

A pang shot through Madge's heart as she read the concluding lines of this letter.

"Gerald about to be married—and to Rose," she said, dreamily, letting the letter drop from her hand. Then rose up before her mental vision the old crescent at Wexeter, round which she and Gerald Hardinge had walked on that well-remembered night. His words rung again in her ears. "You know how I love and worship you, my darling! How, since the first hour I saw you, I have been your slave, never happy but when near you, and having no other thought but of and for you."

And now he was going to be married to Rose! Madge bent her head upon her breast, and her muttered words, "I suppose it is all for the best," sounded very hopelessly.

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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER VIII. THE WOODS BECKON.

FIVE years have passed since Paul Finiston sailed away with the Liverpool captain. Many changes have taken place of course. For instance, May is a woman, and Aunt Martha has begun to wear spectacles. The rose-hedges at Monasterlea have grown thicker between the garden and the tombstones, and the grave of Father Felix has got a handsome cross. But no events have happened of more importance than these.

The miser of Tobereevil is still a mystery of iniquity to the people who starve in their cabins to pay him the rents which he extorts. He looks a little more shadowy and ragged than ever as he glides about his grounds, rubbing his lean hands, and looking nervously over his shoulder. People who speak to him say he is more irascible than he used to be; but these are few besides old Tibbie, Con the fool, and a saturnine lawyer who appears at proper intervals to collect the rents. Con is often at Tobereevil. He picks a bone over the ashes with Tibbie in the kitchen, and sleeps on some straw in a corner. He is the only company old Simon will tolerate of an evening, but it is true that the miser likes to see him sitting chattering his idiot's speech on one of the old oaken chairs opposite his own, or, still better, performing antics in the middle of the floor. Perhaps it is because any other visitor would require some kind of entertainment in the way of food, or drink, or firing, and yet that the miser must sometimes see a friend. But Tibbie will tell us that Con has a right to come and go at Tobereevil. Con is her sister's son, and he is also, she says, the nephew of old Simon. It is a fact that there was a third brother, who lived and died in poverty at the other end of Ireland. While Con was a child Tibbie appeared at Tobereevil with the gibbering urchin by the hand, and told her story to every one who met her. Some laughed at her, and others believed her, but none knew whether she could substantiate her claim. At all events she engaged to be the miser's housekeeper, and in this hungry situation she has remained ever since. And Con comes and goes, and lives about the country. Tibbie will tell us that he will inherit Tobereevil, having full as good a right as the son of that fine captain and his madam who came spying here once. And she asks eager questions of the lawyer, who nods his head gravely in her witchlike face, and—perhaps being afraid of her, as he now and then passes nights at Tobereevil—does not dash her hopes. As for Con himself, his fool's wits carry no knowledge of the matter. All he knows of the miser is that he hates him with an instinctive hate and fear, mixed with a certain fascination which draws the poor lad to Tobereevil, and prevents his daring to run away when it pleases old Simon to call him to his presence. He sits gazing uneasily in the old man's eyes, like a bird charmed by a hawk. But he also has a curious dread of letting the miser perceive his disgust. When urged to amuse him he does so with the most boisterous of frolics. No man in his senses could so cleverly hide an agony of terror under gambols of wild mirth. Con lives so much among the people that their wrongs are rankling in his heart; and though he may not be wise enough to

understand all things, yet he knows the sound of a curse when he hears it. And he has certain ideas linked inseparably in his mind: curses and sorrow, and the name of Simon Finiston.

As for Sir John and Lady Archbold, the varieties in their lives have been many since the day of that wild visit to Monasterlea. Her child in health by her side, Lady Archbold had set herself to work to make up for the little time that had been lost; to forget her sorrow; and to enjoy her life. She had got her own way, as she had always been accustomed to get it, and she no longer believed it possible that Fate or Heaven could have ever meant to venture to contradict her. She had long assured her husband that the motion through the air had alone cured their Katherine; that doctors were humbugs, and priests impostors. That wary old man had known very well the effect of fresh air on such a patient! Yet to be sure they owed it to themselves to seem grateful. They had gone, no doubt, to ask a favour, and, after all, the favour had been granted. Lady Archbold frowned when her husband attempted to check her in her haughty discourse, which criticised pretty equally the doings of both heaven and earth. But she made no objection when he spoke of sending a present to Monasterlea. Some one there must get a gift from their hands. So a present was sent to May with Miss Archbold's love. It was a valuable workbox of Indian carving, with fittings of filigree silver. The little girl had been a nice little girl, said Lady Archbold, and Katherine had pronounced her to be highly agreeable. She was really deserving of such a handsome box. And the present was accepted, after some hesitation on Miss Martha's part, and was duly installed as an ornament in the parlour at Monasterlea. But May did not hoard it among her treasures as she would have done had Katherine not slighted her dead uncle. She did not rub it all over with a loving touch, nor gaze at it with delight, as she often did afterwards with Paul's black cross. The box took its place as an ornament of the house, and was admired, and nothing more.

Lady Archbold's plan of self-indulgence included the over-indulgence of her daughter. Katherine was allowed to do anything she pleased, to have all she wished for, to love and entertain herself with any one she fancied, to dislike whom she chose, and to punish whom she disliked. She was Lady Archbold's only child, and it was good enough work for the world to amuse her with the best it had to give. Had she been less beautiful, her father would have perceived sooner what in the end he had to see. He had to admit that the girl was growing up ignorant and unruly. She would not learn or obey. Her passions were boisterous, her covetousness unbounded. Her appetite for praise, for amusement, for display, and power, were alike insatiable and intolerable. She was becoming irksome even to her parents. So Katherine was at last taken from Camlough, whence many weeping governesses had departed in their time, and was placed at a boarding-school in England.

But even then all the trouble was not over. Whatever might be the reason, Katherine Archbold did not remain long at any one school. Mistresses were too harsh, companions too exacting, or Katherine was unmanageable and selfish. Sir John and Lady Archbold found the whole world in cruel conspiracy against their idol. At last they took her abroad, and placed her at a fashionable Parisian school. Here, after some time, there were no longer complaints of her. Here, after two years, she was found a woman fully grown, with her beauty quite developed, a thousand fascinations and accomplishments acquired, and with manners as silken as her hair. Again Lady Archbold was triumphant over Fate. Her efforts had vanquished yet another threatened disappointment. The father and mother exulted over her, and carried her away, glorifying her to the fullest satisfaction of their pride. They decked her, and flattered her, and bowed down before her. And after some months of travelling up and down in foreign countries, they took her to London and presented her to the world. And then there came more travelling and visiting among English friends. A home, however noble, being hidden behind Irish mountains, was not likely to be soon sought by Miss Archbold.

It was just about this time, when Katherine was dancing out her first season, and while May Mourne, a young woman of another sort, was waxing towards a healthier maturity, that old Tibbie made a move at Tobereevil, which was destined to have an influence on the lives of the two girls.

The miser was sick. What was the matter with him no one knew outside the gates. For Simon would not hear of a doctor, and Tibbie undertook to cure him. True, it was said that Tibbie knew more of the rank and poisonous growths that were

hidden in the darkest spots in the heart of the Wicked Woods than of kindly and healing herbs such as restore human life. But Tibbie knew what she was about, and she undertook to cure her master.

He lay in a sick-room, the ceiling of which let in the rain. The windows were stuffed with rags in sundry places, and the wind came in boldly through many loop-holes and crannies. The blankets were scant on the bed; but this did not matter, as the miser would not remove any of his ordinary clothing. He wore vest, and hat, and boots as he lay, with a stick at his hand to help him to spring up if needful. Did he lie in his bed as a sick man should lie, he might be cheated into a serious illness. In the end he should be made away with as dead, while some one would get hold of his possessions. Tibbie's moving shadow, as she prowled about, haunted him from all corners of the room. Tibbie might want to strangle him were he not ready to defend himself with that stick. He hated Tibbie, and his fears distorted her into a demon, whereas she was only a cunning old woman. And Con was his only refuge from Tibbie, yet the miser was too sick to relish the pranks of his fool.

Tibbie never brought him his scanty messes of food, nor his dose of healing herbs, that she did not also administer a bitter which he could not swallow, to wit, a hint that her master should make his will.

"Make it an' sign it an' lock it bye," she would say. "It won't shoot ye nor poison ye. It won't give ye faver nor cholic. Ye'll live the longer for knowin' that all ye have'll go to poor innicent Con, yer brother's own child, instead of bein' wrastled over an' torn to bits by sthrangers. The simple boy'll put nothin' to waste, but keep up the place as it's always been kep, an' be a credit to the family name."

The miser gnashed his teeth under her hands, but gave her fair words, because he was afraid of her. He was obstinate, however, and would not satisfy her. Then she began to punish him. She kindled a large fire in the hungry grate, consuming coals and wood before his eyes with such speed that the miser groaned and cried at the waste, as though his own withered bones had been crackling in the furnace. Then she brought wine to his side, and fat roasted hens, and large rolls of butter, and tea, and ham, besides every other delicacy that could be had in the country, taking care to magnify the cost of each dish as she laid it before him. And then when she had tortured him sufficiently in this way she went away and left him unattended in his lair. And at last he declared that he could deny her no longer, but must crave her to bring him ink and a pen. He would beg her to stand by while he wrote to his lawyer. The lawyer must come quickly and draw up the will.

Now was Tibbie's moment of exultation. She felt rewarded for all her ingenuity when she saw the miser's lean hand scrawling the words over the paper. But Tibbie was not able to read, or she would have known even then that her master had outwitted her.

Tibbie had gone too far; had been a thought too clever. She had tortured him so that he desired to be revenged on her. He had never believed Con to be his brother's son; would not have suffered him to come near him if he had. Tibbie was an impostor, but she was usefnl to him. Con was an impostor, but he amused him. But now Tibbie must be punished, and there was a nephew named Paul. He would torment his tormentor by bringing her face to face with the heir of Tobereevil. Heir of Tobereevil! The very thought of such a title enraged him. But Tibbie must be punished.

So the letter to the lawyer contained instructions relating to an advertisement. Through the medium of every English and Irish paper notice was to be given to one Paul Finiston that his presence was earnestly requested at Tobereevil. The lawyer read the letter thrice over, and turned it upside down, and turned it inside out. But there was no mistake about it, and the advertisement went flying over the world.

But long before the notice fell under Paul's eye the miser was well and stronger than he had been for many years. Tibbie had fallen back into her proper place, knowing that her master had slipped through her fingers this time. The miser's anxiety to punish Tibbie had grown weaker, while his superstitious dread of his kinsman had returned with more than its former strength. And he was fully prepared to resist Paul Finiston, if so be the lad should prove so greedy as to obey his uncle's summons.

CHAPTER IX. KATHERINE WITH A LOVER.

THE Archbolds had been out of the country for two or three years. Those hopes and fears, and anxieties and delights about their troublesome and idolised daughter had kept them in such a tumult of going and coming, and not knowing

where they were to be next or what they were to do afterwards, that they never had been able to drag themselves so far out of her reach as to repose themselves, even for a day, in the solitude of Camlough. But now they were coming home. The news spread gladly over the country. Sir John was a good landlord, and pleasant-spoken with his people. He was "that kind, you wouldn't think he was a gintleman at all," whereas the agent might be "an imperor for impidence!" There would be no more ejectments. There would be no more snapping of whips in an honest but helpless man's face; for the agent was better-mannered when the master was in the country. Even the ladies got a welcome, which in truth they had never earned. It was a fine thing, after all, to have a grand lady going stepping about the mountains, even though Lady Archbold's high nose might be a thing of awe to the peasants. So the Archbolds were at home; and they had brought with them an Anglo-American mother and her son; about whom there is a story which shall be told.

It may be that this castle of Camlough was not in reality more magnificent than many other dwellings of its kind. Perhaps here surprise added something to splendour. The castle in itself was an imposing mass of stateliness, old enough and grey enough to accord well with the scenery around it; yet with no signs of age or decay; strong and grand, and big and handsome, overflowing even through its windows and doors with the fulness of the adornments and luxuries of the day. It stood in a sheltered valley, among mountains. This valley was in reality "Camlough in the hills," for the hills had opened and made place for it down among their knees, and cherished and protected it, kept away the harsher winds, and invited down the kindly sun, till under their fostering care it had grown rich and fruitful, and sumptuous with beauty. The loneliness of its glens and dingles made fairyland in the fissures of the awful rocks which overhung it. Trees of the most beautiful foliage had climbed dizzy heights, and clothed them with colour, and softened their wild outlines. The scarlet berries and light plumage of the mountain-ash hung clear against the deep blue sky. A hundred waterfalls made silver tracks down the brown-purple steeps of the mountains, like gleaming stairways into the clouds. There were lakes in the violet summits of those broom-covered mountains, and wonderful wildernesses of beauty in their hollows. One vast torrent roared all the winter through at the back of the castle, on its way from some lofty tarn to the sea. For at one side the valley the encircling hills gave way, and the blue Atlantic filled the gap on the horizon, with its flecks of creamy rock and its amethystine islands, its flights of white birds and rare flitting sails. And craft from the nearest fishing-village on the coast would shelter betimes under the cliffs; and sometimes a stranger would alight upon the warm gold sands of the creek and explore a little this nook of beauty, which was so generously cultivated and so gratefully fruitful, so hidden from the world, as if giants had built it round with strong high walls on purpose to keep it a solitude for ever. And seals would lie and bask upon the sand in the hot sun; and it was haunted by a mermaid, who was often seen swimming round the headlands in the gloaming, and was well known to sleep here upon moonlight nights. And the golden eagles barked to one another over the months of the deep caves, through which the high green water, with thunder and music, rolled itself heavily into mysterious abysses of the earth, coming back again moaning, with much tumult and confusion.

The castle itself stood at the back of the valley well set against the brawniest-wooded mountain of the range. Blooming gardens gathered round it, blushing up to its windows, and laughing in at its very doors, and wandering away thence into wide mossy lawns, and soft leafy slopes and dells. There was an exuberant growth of flowers everywhere, and people fancied that their colours were more brilliant at Camlough than at any other place. Certain it is that fruits would ripen here in open air that would not grow out of hot-house in other parts of the land. A walk round the back premises of the castle explained the mystery of how everything were done in order and kept in order in the place as perfectly as though Camlough were an outskirt of London. All around one vast paved yard cottages stood in rows, which were the homes of the tradesmen whom it was useful to have at hand. There were trees growing in the middle of the yard, and garden-beds round the windows of the cottages. Trees leaned high over the walls, and nodded about the chimneys, and the peaks of the mountains looked over into the yard. And the goodwives knew better than to

keep their houses untidy, for many pretty presents came from the castle to the thrifty housewife. They would sit out of the sun under their trees with their sewing in their hands, and their children playing about them, while their good men were absent at the castle, as it might be, or were busy in the sheds at the lower end of the yard.

Thus it was that Sir John dwelt among his people like a feudal lord surrounded by his retainers. Numbers of his tenants lived high above on the hills, or their dwellings nestled in bloomy places between the rocks, by the side of running streams, or peeping from behind shelter of rugged cliffs against the sea. There was no scarcity of anything about Camlough, neither of human beings, nor of kine, nor of flocks, nor of birds, nor of deer and other wild animals, nor of the produce of the earth.

It was midsummer time, and Katherine entertained a hay-making group, sitting under a haycock in a meadow, telling them anecdotes of the neighbourhood, giving ludicrous descriptions of the people, including the miser of Tobereevil and the dead monk who had lived at Monasterlea. It was the midsummer heat that specially reminded her of that strange, wild visit that she had once paid to the monastery, and she related the story for the amusement of her guests. She was aware that this was a picturesque incident in her life, and it charmed her to sketch herself as the centre of a picture. There was at least one person by her side who was eager to swallow any morsel which her vanity might throw him. It was scarcely likely that any young man should be many hours at Camlough and not be written down in the list of Katherine's suitors. It was still less likely that he should be welcome there if he chose to keep his heart to himself. Katherine was a queen who would have none around her but her courtiers. In the present instance here was a willing if a suffering captive, who had already graced many triumphs of his royal mistress. The name of this unfortunate was Christopher Lee. He was not a wit, nor a genius, nor handsome; neither was he as yet a millionaire. Whether he ever should be the latter or not, was a question at present in the balance. It seemed hanging upon the blowing of a straw. It all lay at the mercy of a woman's little humour; a yes or a no, a smile or a frown; for Christopher was one of those headlong people who will stake the whole world upon a die. He was a large, light-haired, long-faced youth, with fair, dim eyes, and not overmuch brains under his smooth pale forehead. His long eager lips were too nervous and full of feeling to keep safe company with the simplicity of his eyes. He was not like a man to do well with the world unless Fortune might choose to take him in her lap and make a pet of him. And this had seemed a likely chance; for Fortune is very fond of odd playthings. Yet she could not have done better than take Christopher on her knee; and this is the young man of whom a story could be told. To be the heroine of that story was Katherine Archbold's liveliest excitement at this moment: and it must be said that she looked fit to be the heroine of the most fascinating tale that ever was told, as she sat against a hayrick, holding a hat crowned with poppies above her golden head.

It ought to be a pleasant task to describe Katherine Archbold. The description of a blonde beauty is always charming, and Katherine was a blonde of the most genuine type. Her hair was of the purest and most luminous sun-colour. When loosened, it fell round her like a cloak, silken in texture, rippling and flossy, and descending below her knees. When tied and pinned up in the order of fashion, it was found woven into a massive crown of gold, which alone proclaimed her a queen by its glory upon her head. Her features came as near to the old Greek model as features ever do in these countries; and her eyes were blue; the glamouring, light-receiving, forget-me-not blue. The only thing you could find fault with was the expression of her mouth; but not many people thought of it, as it certainly did not mar the physical beauty of her face. The mouth in itself was a handsome one, but to a few observers there was a failure about it somehow. Through all the many changes of the countenance it was not found to be a mobile mouth. It could keep a hard secret well while the eyes were declaring that this face was the most tell-tale face ever seen. Sometimes a tinge of cruelty constrained it to be frank, and to pain those worshippers who might be watching for its smiles. And unfortunately this cruelty was not the mischievousness of fun, but the cruelty of a will that would not suffer itself to be crossed. She was tall and robust, and stately in her carriage, and more costly as to her raiment than a princess.

"I wish I had seen that old monk," said Christopher, rolling his pale eyes with enthusiasm. "But for him," he added to

Katherine, "you might not be in the world; and what would my life have been then?" he asked, blankly, as he looked this new idea in the face.

"You are a fool," said Katherine, emphatically, but in the softest whisper.

Christopher gazed up at her and blinked with delight. He accepted her accusation, and enraptured himself over the idea of his folly. It was true that he had staked everything on her caprice, but he dreamed that all goodness and happiness were to be included in the reward of his venture. In the end that was soon to come his foolishness must be found equal to the most cautious wisdom. This is what she had hinted in her more serious moods, and who would dare insinuate that she was untrue?

"A ridiculous little mummy of a man," went on Katherine.

"Who is dead, however," interrupted her father, very gently. "Come, Kate, we are not going to laugh at dead men."

Miss Archbold bowed her head, and frowned under the shelter of her hat, and exerted severe control over her temper, while she tore up some fresh roses with sudden fury in her fingers.

"That is how I am afraid you will tear up my heart," said simple Christopher, trying to make a joke. But a flash from her eyes made him quail as he spoke, while the next moment he was blinded by a shower of rent rose-leaves.

"Oh, you fool, you fool!" murmured Katherine, who had seen his fright, and who had melted again as suddenly as she had flamed. Christopher was himself again, for that musical murmur of a curious pet name was the very signal and watchword of his delight. And he was right in expecting that she would now be very good to him, for she dropped him one sweet word after another, while she picked up her flowers and pretended to put them to rights again; as if sorry for the destruction she had made.

Mrs. Lee sighed as she looked at the picture of the beautiful young woman sitting smiling in the hay, and the bewitched young man at her feet. Mrs. Lee was a troubled-looking woman, with large brown eyes, and very odd manners. This son of hers was like to break her heart.

Sir John stood a little aloof from the group, and had evidently at this moment got something on his mind. He had done a good-natured thing and was nervous about confessing it. He was not master of his castle which people envied him. But the truth came out at last. He had invited a young friend to pay a visit to his daughter.

"Not the old lady from Monasterlea, I hope?" said Katherine, without a frown.

"No," said the father, laughing, because relieved of his secret. "Not the old lady, only the little girl."

Katherine hesitated to smile, but afterwards smiled brightly. The recollection of little May was very pleasant to her. There never had been a lover on her list who had admired her more frankly than little May.

"It was rather premature of you to give an invitation," said Lady Archbold, who had not seen Katherine's smile. "The girl was a nice child enough when we saw her; but, brought up in the wilderness as she has been, the chances are that she is uncouth and uneducated."

Katherine rather liked this suggestion.

"Whether or not," she said, imperiously, "we are going to have her here."

"Certainly, my darling, if you wish it," her ladyship said, hurriedly. And then seeing that Mrs. Lee looked strangely at her, she drew away that lady to stroll with her under some distant trees; and to explain by the way how generous and hospitable her dear Katherine was, and what a lively attachment she had always cherished to a stupid little girl whom she had not seen for years. Sir John also made a thankful escape, being relieved of his confession, and having regained his peace of mind.

When the elders had gone, Katherine stood up, yawned a little, threw herself back against the haycock, and remained reclining there, as if lazily enjoying her life, and the sunshine, and every soft influence of the moment. She gazed towards the clouds, the hills, the trees, the lawns, and then slowly brought her eyes to Christopher's passionate gaze, which was bent upon her full all the time. Then she smiled in his eyes, just as if she had been a true-hearted woman who had pledged her love, and was not ashamed of its being seen.

"Katherine, Katherine!" cried Christopher, as if in bodily pain, "why will you love to torture me? Why will you not speak out at once? When will you answer me? When will you promise to be my wife?"

She took his outstretched hand tenderly in her own, and patted it soothingly with her jewelled fingers.

"Poor little Christopher!" she said, "poor dear Christopher! why will you not be patient?"

"Because I love you!" broke out the poor youth; "I love you—bitterly!" And he fairly burst into tears.

"I do not like bitter love," said Katherine, coldly, letting fall his hand.

Christopher dashed off his tears, and turned aside with an impulse of sullen shame.

"It is hard to know how to please," he said, "when one's heart is breaking."

"Breaking, is it?" said Katherine, lightly. "Oh no, don't let it be so foolish. Come, now, you need not look so sad. Why should we hurry over the pleasant part of life? There is no reason for haste, is there?"

"There *is* reason for haste," said Christopher, vehemently.

"Nay, now, what is it?" said Katherine, staring at him.

But Christopher's unruliness was over for the present. He had blushed crimson, and had nothing more to say. He folded his long arms, and gazed doggedly on the ground.

"Come, now, you are sulky!" said Katherine. "Cannot you be good-tempered? And I was just going to offer you a treat."

"A treat?" echoed Christopher, without raising his eyes.

"Yes, a treat." She laid her hand coaxingly on his arm. "Are you quite too ill-humoured to ride with me to-morrow?"

"Not quite," replied Christopher, unbending.

"In that case, I am going to Monasterlea," said Katherine.

"To Monasterlea?" said Christopher, astray.

"Yes; to unearth a young woman out of the ruins."

And Katherine laughed gaily; expecting a new excitement in the meek-eyed worship which little May was going to give her.

CHRONICLES OF LONDON STREETS.

FLEET-STREET (THE WEST END).

PERHAPS no part of London has ever been more illuminated by flares of torches or blazes of squibs than the Temple Bar end of Fleet-street.

It was to that attenuated figure of Queen Elizabeth in the south-east niche that the raging Protestants of Charles the Second's reign made their fanatical pilgrimages, at the dictation of that clever sedition-monger Lord Shaftesbury. These dangerous processions of an angry and turbulent mob arose out of the spurious Popish Plot. This entirely imaginary conspiracy, which led to the persecution and death of many innocent men, came to light on the 12th of August, 1678. As the king was strolling in the park, one Kirby, a chemist, accosted him, and said: "Sire, keep within the company. Your enemies have a design upon your life, and you may be shot in this very walk." The intrusive chemist, then gaining the ear of the swarthy king, assured him that the Jesuits had hired two men, named Grove and Pickering, to shoot him with silver bullets, and Sir George Wakeman, the queen's physician, to poison him. Doctor Tongue, a restless London divine, who had written violently against the Jesuits, had been Kirby's informant. Tongue had been warned by a man who had thrust papers with the intelligence under his door. The mysterious Protestant turned out to be the afterwards notorious Titus Oates, the son of an Anabaptist preacher, who had taken orders, and had received a small living from the Duke of Norfolk. Indicted for perjury, Oates became a naval chaplain, but had been dismissed with disgrace. He had then turned Catholic, and entered the Jesuit college at St. Omer, whence he had been ignominiously expelled. Before the Lord Treasurer and Sir Edmundbury Godfrey, a celebrated anti-Roman Catholic justice, these fanatical meddlers and wretches invented and repeated a myriad lies. Four Irish ruffians had been hired to stab the king at Windsor, and Sir George Wakeman, for poisoning Charles, was to receive fifteen thousand pounds. For killing the king, Grove was to receive fifteen thousand pounds, and Pickering, a less avaricious murderer, thirty thousand masses. Twenty thousand London Roman Catholics were to rise on an appointed day, massacre all the Protestants, and burn London a second time. Scotland and Ireland were to rise, and two hundred thousand pounds and forty thousand "black bills" had been provided for the latter revolt. All the Irish Protestants were to be massacred; while, according to that brazen liar Oates, eighty Jesuit hirelings had expended seven hundred fire-balls in burning London in 1666, when they had stolen in the confusion fourteen thousand pounds' worth of property. If the Duke of York did not consent to the utter extirpation of the Protestant religion, "then to pot James must go," was the Jesuits' decision. The plotters, as Oates declared, had a secret jargon of their own. Fire-balls were called "Tewkes-

bury mustard pills," containing a notable biting sauce. The king was to eat no more Christmas pies. If Charles would not turn R. C., he was no longer to be C. R. Among other doomed victims were Burnet, the historian, and the celebrated controversialist, Stillingfleet. Père la Chaise, the confessor of Louis the Fourteenth, had sent ten thousand pounds for the king's assassin, a Spaniard was ready with the same handsome reward, and a Benedictine prior had promised six thousand pounds. These detestable falsehoods were eagerly swallowed by a multitude whom Charles's French alliance had driven insane with suspicion. Two months later, on the 17th of October, the supposed murder of Sir Edmundbury Godfrey, whose body was found in a ditch a little north of Primrose Hill, produced a fresh popular paroxysm. The justice had really committed suicide, but it was supposed that he had been murdered by two men of the Queen's Chapel at Somerset House. A Captain Bedloe, a man still more infamous, if possible, than even Oates, now presented himself. He was known to be a thief and swindler. This base rascal, careless whom he sent to Tyburn or to Tower Hill, swore point-blank to Godfrey's murder by the queen's Popish servants. Finding the populace eager for fresh lies, he asserted that ten thousand men from Flanders were to be landed in Bridlington Bay, and pushed on at once, in order to seize Hull. French forces from Brest were simultaneously to surprise Jersey and Guernsey. In Radnorshire, Lords Powis and Peters were also to form an army, aided by twenty thousand pilgrims sent from Spain to Milford Haven. Forty thousand Catholics, supplied with money by Lord Stafford, Lord Carrington, Lord Brudenel, and Coleman, the ex-secretary of the Duchess of York, were to be posted at the alehouse doors in London, in readiness, when the signal of rising was given, to murder the soldiers as they hurried out of their quarters. Bedloe himself, for various murders, had been promised four thousand pounds, a commission from Lord Bellasis, and a benediction from the pope. No wonder that the alarmed City instantly chained up its gates, and that the foolish City chamberlain declared that, but for these precautions, "all true Protestants would rise some morning with their throats cut." Shaftesbury and other plotters took good care to keep the popular frenzy up to blood heat. The dead body of Godfrey was carried on a bier to its grave at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, preceded by seventy-two Protestant divines, and followed by a thousand persons of distinction, while at the funeral sermon two stalwart rectors mounted the pulpit, and stood on either side of the preacher, lest he should be murdered by the Papists before the very eyes of the congregation. As for Oates, he was lodged in Whitehall, protected, guarded, and cheered by a pension of twelve hundred pounds a year. But the mob was too much alarmed not to be cruel. The myriad heads of the Hydra thirsted for blood. Coleman, Father Leland, Grove, and Pickering were all hung, and Poole, Green, and Berry, suspected of Godfrey's murder, followed them to death. The Duke of York retired to Brussels. The Duke of Monmouth grew more and more popular and dangerous, and his legitimacy was now asserted. In the full furnace-heat of this madness, Shaftesbury and his partisans brought in their famous bill for the total exclusion of the Duke of York from the crown of England and Ireland, and the Lower House passed this bill by a majority of seventy-nine.

The street processions organised by Shaftesbury to drive away the Duke of York and scare Charles, were on a gigantic scale, and appealed strongly to the excited people. First came:

1. Six whifflers (men to clear the way) in pioneers' caps and red waistcoats.

2. A bellman ringing his bell and continually crying with "a dolesome voice," "Remember Justice Godfrey."

3. An effigy representing the unfortunate justice as he was found near Primrose Hill, in a decent black habit, white gloves, the cravat with which it was supposed he was strangled, white gloves, and large spots of blood on his wrists, breast, and shirt, rode upon a white horse, held up by a fictitious murderer who rode behind him, in the way it was presumed the corpse was carried from Somerset House.

4. A priest in a surplice and cope embroidered with skulls, cross-bones, and skeletons. He gave away pardons very lavishly to all who promised to murder Protestants, acts which he loudly proclaimed to be meritorious.

5. A priest bearing a great silver cross.

6. Four Carmelite friars in black and white robes.

7. Four Greyfriars.

8. Six Jesuits with bloody daggers.

9. "Four wind musicks," called the

waits, playing all the way—loud and brazen enough, no doubt, were the four wind musicks.

10. Four bishops in purple, with lawn sleeves, golden crosses on their breasts, and crosses in their hands.

11. Four other bishops "in their pontificalibus;" that is, surplices, rich embroidered copes, and golden mitres.

12. Six flaunting cardinals in scarlet robes and broad red hats.

13. The pope's chief physician with Jesuits' powder (Peruvian bark), and many grotesque and unmentionable badges of his office.

14. Two more priests in surplices, bearing golden crosses.

Then came the pope himself in a scarlet chair of state, embroidered with golden bells and crosses. His holiness's feet were on a cushion, and a boy in a surplice sat on each side of him, holding a white silk banner painted with red crosses and "bloody consecrated daggers." The pope was arrayed in a rich scarlet gown lined with ermine, and daubed with gold and silver lace. He wore his triple tiara and a triple gilt collar of sham jewels, beads, and Agnus Dei, and prominently above the rest Saint Peter's potent keys. At the pope's back tripped and whispered the devil, waving a blazing torch, urging his holiness aloud to murder the king, forge a pretended Presbyterian plot, and fire the City again. The pope was followed by a body-guard of one hundred and fifty torches, followed by several thousand volunteer flambeaux-bearers, and a fellow whom Roger North describes, who, with a stentorophonic tube (a speaking-trumpet), kept remorselessly bellowing "Abhorrers! Abhorrers!" (the name given by the Whigs to the enemies of the Exclusion Bill). Last of all came an obsequious, time-serving, civil gentleman, who was meant to represent either Sir Roger l'Estrange (a Tory journalist and pamphleteer in the pay of Louis the Fourteenth) or the Duke of York. "Taking all in good part, he went on his way to the fire."

The whole way, say contemporaneous writers, the balconies, windows, and roofs were covered with shouting multitudes, expressing their abhorrence of Popery, and the Whigs and Tories fought with volleys of squibs. The procession moved on in slow and solemn state, till after some hours it reached Temple Bar, where the houses were turned into actual mountains of clamorous human beings.

After a great display of fireworks, a huge bonfire was built up at the Inner Temple Gate to entertain the spectators, and his holiness, after "some compliments and reluctances," was toppled into the flames, the devil, who till then accompanied him as his faithful adviser, laughing as he shifted down from his chair, and left the pontiff to his fate. That same memorable evening there were bonfires in most of the other chief streets of London, the people shouting round them, "Let Popery perish," and Papists, with their plots and counterplots, be for ever confounded." It was these processions that led the contemptuous and classical Tories to invent the word mob, "mobile vulgus," and it was about this time the nicknames Whig (sour whey) and Tory (Irish rebel) were first used in political warfare.

Even in Swift's time the processions continued; and one especial one, in which Addison was supposed to be mixed up, was violently stopped by the Tory government, who caused the wax figures to be seized in Drury-lane. In Wilkes's time the mob again came trooping to Temple Bar to burn a jack-boot, in ridicule of the obnoxious Lord Bute.

The celebrated Devil Tavern, in the reign of King James the First, stood in the close, now Child's-place, No. 2, Fleet-street, built by Child the eminent banker next the Bar, in 1788. Ben Jonson's immortal Apollo Club, where the wittiest and wisest of England so often met, has consecrated this place for ever. The Apollo Club, established by the rugged friend of Shakespeare, held its merry meetings in a room of the Devil Tavern. The Apollo room, a large and handsome one, and furnished with a gallery for music, was in later times frequently used for balls, and here, in 1775, Doctor Kenrick gave his lectures on Shakespeare. Over the door of the room, where so much canary had been tossed off, and where so many wise and brilliant men had laughed away the midnight, was a slab, still preserved, with the following roystering verses, written in gold letters on a black ground. They were probably from the pen of Ben Jonson, or that jovial Devonshire parson, Herrick:

> Welcome all who lead or follow
> To the oracle of Apollo.
> Here he speaks out of his pottle,
> Or his tripos, his tower bottle;
> All his answers are divine,
> Truth itself doth flow in wine.
> Hang up all the poor hop drinkers,
> Cries old Tim the king of thinkers;
> He the half of life abuses,
> That sits watering with the muses;

Those dull girls no good can mean us,
Wine it is the milk of Venus.
And the poet's horse accounted,
Ply it and you all are mounted;
'Tis the true Phœbeian liquor,
Clears the brain, makes wit the quicker,
Pays all debts, cures all diseases,
And at once three senses pleases.
Welcome all who lead or follow
To the oracle of Apollo.
Oh, rare Ben Jonson!

The last four words (forming the epitaph which an Oxfordshire baronet had cut upon the paving-stone over the poet's grave in the north aisle of Westminster Abbey) we must presume to have been added to the verses after Jonson's death.

On a slab of black marble, over the chimney-piece of this classic room, were inscribed the following lines, written, as Gifford thinks, in imitation of those rules of the Roman entertainments, so industriously collected by the learned Lipsius. We append the old translation, written by we know not whom, unworthy as it is of the crisp Latin of the original code:

As the fund of our pleasure let each pay his shot,
Except some chance friend whom a member brings in,
Far hence be the sad, the lewd fop and the sot, –
For such have the plagues of good company been.

Let the learned and witty, the jovial and gay,
The generous and honest compose our free state,
And the more to exalt our delight whilst we stay,
Let none be debarred from his choice female mate.

Let no scent offensive the chamber infest,
Let fancy not cost prepare all our dishes,
Let the caterer mind the taste of each guest,
And the cook in his dressing comply with their wishes.

Let's have no disturbance about taking place,
To show your nice breeding or out of vain pride;
Let the drawers be ready with wine and fresh glasses,
Let the waiters have eyes though their tongues must be ty'd.

Let our wines without mixture or strum be all fine,
Or call up the master and break his dull noddle,
Let no sober bigot here think it a sin
To push on the drinking a moderate bottle.

Let the contests be rather of books than of wine,
Let the company be neither noisy nor mute,
Let none of things serious much less divine,
When belly and head full profanely dispute.

Let no saucy fiddler presume to intrude,
Unless he is sent for to vary our bliss,
With wit, mirth, and dancing, and singing conclude,
To regale every sense with delight in excess.

There is nothing remarkable about these rules laid down by Ben Jonson; they provide only for the goodness of the wine, the cleanness and neatness requisite to comfort, and the exclusion of noisy, ribald, moping, or drunken persons, the bane and kill-joys of such pleasant meetings. We cannot suppose that the clause allowing the introduction of ladies was often taken advantage of, nor could dancing have been frequently practised, for Ben was too ponderous for the brawl or the coranto. Clause fifteen guards against the importunities and pertinacities of those intrusive wandering musicians who, in the seventeenth century, haunted taverns, and levied contributions on the guests. When the talk was good, and men like Donne and Selden were exchanging learning, or Randolph and Broome wit, this rough music forced upon the company would have been especially disagreeable, and Ben did well to bar out such "saucy fiddlers." These laws, says that genial critic, Leigh Hunt, for whom, however, Ben was far too muscular and robust, "are composed in his usual style of elaborate and compiled learning, not without a taste of that dictatorial self-sufficiency which forms an indelible part of his character."

There is no doubt that the Apollo Club was one of the earliest associations of the kind known in London. Many of the elements of the modern club were comprehended in its constitution. The meetings were more formal than those earlier ones at the Mermaid. Its members had a room and rules of their own. The attendance was habitual though voluntary. No chance guest of the tavern could intrude on Ben and his tribe. Every man paid for himself, and probably also joined in the subscription for the use of the room, which was no doubt set apart for the use of the club at certain prescribed evenings. The thrifty and simple age had not yet dreamed of such palaces as now adorn Pall Mall and Piccadilly; of liveried servants, libraries, and splendid furniture. The Apollo room, where men who had known Shakespeare talked of him and repeated his merry sayings, had no doubt a sanded or rush-strewn floor, with tree-boughs in the fireplace in summer, and a cheerful fire in winter. Plain stamped leather hangings or simple wainscot adorned the walls, and the meat was served on shining pewter. The drawers were such nimble creatures as the Francis Shakespeare sketched in Henry the Fourth, and Sir Simon himself, the landlord of the house, was no doubt a rosy-faced, portly personage, with much of Falstaff's promptness at banter, and a fondness for odd sayings stolen from plays, and quaint proverbs and snatches of old world songs, that were ready missiles against satirical guests.

It is but waste castle-building even to attempt to picture one of those gatherings in the Apollo room, but we must perforce see one figure standing out above the rest

and throned above all. That figure is Ben Jonson, the monarch, father, and despot of the company. Burly and massive as the subsequent sultan of London clubs, equally overbearing and equally irresistible, he has a face marked like Johnson's by disease, and has a malign melancholy equally tainting his blood, and driving him from the lonely study to the crowded tavern, from the dusty quiet of silent folios to the noise, mirth, and banter of taverns. Ben himself has sketched his own portrait, "his mountain belly and his rocky face." His features are massive and strongly marked, his mouth is grim and sour. Many chagrins, many vexations, have furrowed that massive, knotty brow. It has taken many hogsheads of good canary to fill out that great elephantine carcass, many intellectual victories in the wrestling ring Ben must have won before he gained that lordly, confident air, that rough readiness with which he tomahawks an antagonist. He rolls in the presidential chair the undisputed Grand Turk of the chief tavern club of London. "Let nobody repeat to us insipid poetry," he writes, as if all that he should read of his own must infallibly be otherwise. There would indeed have been humility in Jonson if he had thought his own poems insipid. Rough and knotty they might be, harsh and crabbed they sometimes were, but Ben was never insipid till the palsy seized him. Jonson's arrogance came from disappointment, as Doctor Johnson's came from success. With more sunshine Ben Jonson would have ripened and mellowed, with more east wind Doctor Johnson would have been less domineering.

Every member of the Devil Club must have known the main facts of Ben Jonson's life. They had all heard that he was of Scotch descent, his father a clergyman, suffering imprisonment under Queen Mary, probably for his staunch Protestantism. His mother, soon after his father's death, married a small builder or master-bricklayer. The sturdy boy was sent by a friend to Westminster School, where Camden the historian was the second master. At sixteen probably Jonson was sent to St. John's College, Cambridge, according to Fuller. Called home to work at his father's trade, he soon threw down hod and trowel and joined the army in Flanders (Gifford says probably at the time that Vere was recovering the spirit of the army by storming Daventer, and other acts of gallantry). Ben there fought and killed an enemy in single combat, and carried off his spoils in the sight of both armies. "I did not shame the profession of arms by my actions," he used to say afterwards. On his return home, Ben Jonson, then about nineteen, took to the stage; Wood says, to the Green Curtain, an obscure theatre in Shoreditch, with what success is uncertain. He fought a duel with a brother actor, and killing him, was thrown into prison for murder, and narrowly escaped the gallows. His antagonist, as he afterwards told Drummond, had come into the field with a sword ten inches longer than his own. In prison he turned Roman Catholic, and on his release married. Two years later, 1578, he wrote his admirable play, Every Man in his Humour. There is a groundless tradition that Shakespeare, ten years older than Jonson, read the play in the manuscript, and saved it from rejection. But Gifford has shown that it was really brought out at the Rose, a rival theatre to the Globe. Yet this is certain, that the play was afterwards altered for the Globe, and that Shakespeare appeared in one of the characters. At this time Ben, though poor, and living by altering plays for Henslowe and Alleyn, the managers, who advanced small sums upon the work, was yet friendly with Drayton and Chapman, Rowley, Middleton, and Fletcher, and had been writing for three years in conjunction with his subsequent enemies, Marston and Decker. His next play, Every Man out of his Humour, was honoured by the presence of Elizabeth. Soon after the accession of James, the poet fell into disgrace. For a satirical passage in Eastward Ho, against "the industrious Scots," written by Jonson, Chapman, and Marston, the three dramatists were thrown into prison. A report was at first spread that they would have their ears and noses slit in the pillory. On their release they gave an entertainment, at which Camden and Selden were present. At this feast Ben's mother drank to him, and showed him a paper containing a strong and lusty poison, which she had intended to have mixed with his drink had he been sentenced to such a degrading punishment. "To show she was no churl," Jonson adds, "she designed to have first drank of it herself."

In 1605, two years after James's accession, Ben Jonson produced his fine play of the Fox, in which he was unjustly supposed to have ridiculed Sir Richard Sutton, the excellent founder of the Charter House; but Ben had many enemies, and he lashed them into incessant rages. About this time Ben Jonson left the Church of Rome,

and, as Drummond perhaps maliciously reports, in the fervour of his zeal drank out the full cup of wine at his first communion. In 1606, for the unfortunate marriage of the Earl of Essex, Jonson began one of the earliest and most beautiful of his long series of masques. The poet, now a favourite with James, became laureate, receiving a pension for life of a hundred marks. Three years after this, Daniel, the previous court poet, died, and James would now have knighted Ben had not the poet been unwilling. The king, however, gave him a reversionary grant of the office of Master of the Revels, a post which he never filled. Soon after the accession of Charles the First, Jonson's health seems to have given way. Always scorbutic, he now became palsied and dropsical. His play of the New Inn was driven from the stage by his malignant enemies, who gained courage when the old lion grew sick. The kindly king instantly sent him a hundred pounds; he soon afterwards granted the poet's petition to make the pension of one hundred marks two hundred pounds, and added, moreover, an annual tierce of canary (Jonson's favourite wine). Evils now fell fast as snow-flakes on the dying man. Inigo Jones, jealous of his violent coadjutor, had him removed from the office of Writer of Court Masques, and the Court of Aldermen (1631) withdrew his City poet's annual pension of one hundred nobles. He died poor, in 1637. His wife and children died before him.

Child's bank, the oldest in London, was founded in the reign of Charles the First, by Francis Child, an apprentice of William Wheeler, goldsmith, whose daughter he married. The banker's old street sign, the Marigold, still hangs in the front office, with the motto "Ainsi mon ame" gilt upon a green ground, and the marigold (often mistaken for a rising sun) still blooms pleasantly upon the cheques. With this trusty firm Charles the Second, Nell Gwynne, Prince Rupert, and, last not least, Samuel Pepys, banked, and in that dim ecclesiastical-looking room over the gateway are still kept the accounts of Alderman Backwell, a partner of the first Child, for the sale of Dunkirk to the French, a bargain that led to the fall of Lord Clarendon, who was supposed to have reared his great palace in Piccadilly (the site of Albemarle-street) with the money. It was at Child and Blanchard's (next door to Temple Bar) that, in 1678, Dryden deposited the fifty pounds reward he offered for the detection of Rochester's bullies, who had fallen upon and beaten him one winter evening in Rose-alley. In 1689, Sir Francis Child was saved from failure by fourteen hundred pounds lent his bank by the Duchess of Marlborough. Hogarth is said to have sketched the presentation of the timely aid. The late beautiful Countess of Jersey was a partner in the firm, and among the present partners is a descendant of Addison.

THE FIRST SNOW.

THERE is sorrow and there is mirth,
The soft white snow is draping the earth,
The boy is shouting and making a slide,
But the cottage hearth lacks fuel inside.

He dips his hands in the snow so gay,
And rubs them hard to keep cold away;
While the puffing beadle, that man of law,
Ties up the village pump with straw!

Chill is the time for man and beast,
The wind cuts sharp as a knife from the east;
The little ones from the cold and ice
Under the bedclothes creep like mice.

With comforters drawn to the chin,
The folk go stamping out and in,
And their noses, as they come and go,
Are red as rosebuds among the snow.

Hatless, capless, mad with fun,
Out of school the urchins run,
Quick as thought the balls are made,
And the air is thick with the cannonade.

They pause as the beadle passes by,
And hang their heads and hush their cry,
But just as the great man disappears
A cold ball strikes him behind the ears!

Off goes his hat—his red face turns,
Red as a turkey's-comb it burns,
But the spell is broken: with shouts and cries
The enemy pelts him till he flies!

All things around us, high or low,
Are under the spell of the white, white snow;
Its mystic hand with a silvern gleam
Trances all to a pleasant dream.

THE BLUEBOTTLE FLY.

A FRENCH ART-STUDENT'S STORY.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER IV.

I HAVE never been able to remember how the remainder of this dread holiday was spent. Memory can recal nothing but a sick and weary search after repose — a yearning desire to lie down and forget all that had taken place since the morning; the scenes in which I had played such unwilling part; in short, my very self. But I walked on — on — on, for I could not rest, trying in vain to lay my aching head against a tree, or sitting down for a moment amid the grass and fern-leaves. But the endeavour was useless. No sooner were my limbs at ease than the whirring

and buzzing in my ears drove me distracted, reminding me with terrible exactness of the accursed spell which some foul sorcery seemed to have flung around me. It was now long past mid-day. I must have walked many miles during that sultry afternoon, without drift or intention, running forward, then turning back, to find myself at the same spot whence I had started. It was not a fête day, so the woods were peaceful enough, and I met but few people in this wild walk. One or two groups passed me on my way, and I observed that they all seemed scared at my approach, and turned to look after me when I had gone by. I remember that one old gentleman of benevolent aspect spoke to me in gentle tones; but the sound of a human voice brought back all the irritation to my brain, and I fled; and starting forward with a bound, all footsore, exhausted, and weary as I was, turned and ran up the steep acclivity I had just descended, as though the hounds and huntsmen were at my heels.

I had tasted nothing since the ill-starred repast with Père Ajax in the early morning; but I felt neither thirst nor hunger, only the peremptory necessity of rest, without the power to seek it, even for an instant. In short, the first symptoms of the brain fever, which was to bring me down to the lowest depths of misery, were already rioting through my whole system. It was not till sundown that I grew more calm; the cool quiet of the evening was soothing in the extreme. I came to myself, as it were, like one awaking from a troubled dream, and began to reconnoitre my whereabouts with something like a return to rational reflection. It was then that, with the greatest delight, I found myself close to the little fountain by the wall of the home park. I hailed the chance as the saving of my life. I drank greedily of the water, and bathed my temples in the hollow basin cut in the stone. The momentary relief seemed like the renovation of existence, and I hastened to the station, which is but a short distance from this spot, with more steadiness and self-command than I could possibly have anticipated, and was whirled into Paris without any cause for further excitement. I even walked home from the terminus, for I dreaded the thumping and bumping of the omnibus, steadily enough, and without attracting observation. How glad was I when the Rue Mazarin first broke upon my sight! And when I again beheld the old house where I knew my dear mother was waiting to comfort and console me, I fairly burst into tears. This was the climax, and by the action I was so much relieved, that I mounted the stairs with something like a return of that calm and self-possession I had enjoyed but for a short space, indeed, since I had left home in the morning. All my weariness and depression seemed to be dispelled as the same soothing red light from the setting sun, as that which had greeted me on the evening before, shone through the staircase windows; and as I passed each landing-place I paused—in spite of my haste to regain the peace and quiet of our mansarde—to feast my eyes upon the well-remembered line of orange-coloured light which had so comforted me before. As I gradually reached the upper story of the house, I grew more subdued, and when at length I stood beneath the dingy skylight in the roof which lighted our own landing, I fancied I had reached at length the haven for which my soul had been sighing so long.

I crept slowly up the few remaining steps leading to our apartment. The door was standing open—a thing so contrary to my mother's reserved and retired habits, that the incident was in itself alone a source of uneasiness and wonder. It actually caused me to quicken my pace; but before I could enter the little anteroom, where our reading-lamp was already burning (another unwonted circumstance in the economy of our daily life), my mother herself appeared upon the threshold. Her countenance was unusually animated, and she spoke in a hurried tone, which betrayed the greatest excitement.

"Make haste, my darling!" exclaimed she, "we have been looking out for you with the greatest impatience. Babette has been twice to the end of the street to see if you were coming."

This greeting surprised me beyond measure. It seemed as if everything had changed as well as myself since I had left the house in the morning, and my temper was anything but soothed by this novel mode of salutation.

My dear mother's mind was evidently intensely preoccupied, for she did not even observe the complete prostration under which I was labouring. And as I was about to throw myself upon a chair she seized me by the arm.

"Nay, dearest, there is no time just now for either talk or rest. You must not even tarry to change your dusty suit. You have

been sent for, nay, sent for twice. What *do* you think?" Here she kissed me fervently on the forehead, but never observed how hot it was. "The story is too long to tell, for time presses," resumed she. "How strange are the ways of Providence! We need never despair; I always knew your talent would be appreciated some day or other, my darling, if once it could be known." And here she kissed me on the cheek and never perceived that it was flushed and heated to excess. But my stupefied and bewildered look must have struck her, nevertheless, for she added with something like a start, and drawing back to gaze more intently into my face:

"But, dear one, I forgot—you know nothing of what has happened. Well, then, see how Fate has been working for you! Just as Babette and I were beginning to expect you home and to prepare your supper, in rushed the boy from the colour-shop, screeching for you at the top of his voice to go immediately to his master for an order. The old lady who bought your beautiful picture last night had sent to the shop for you, to go that moment to take a likeness of some one who is to leave Paris by daybreak to-morrow morning, and cannot wait. No sooner had the boy disappeared than old Nicol himself made his appearance in a towering rage, abusive as usual, against *you* for losing your time in the country, against *me* for having allowed it, and it was only by the assurance of your speedy return that I could induce him to depart. Scarcely had half an hour elapsed before he came once more, this time in a state of frenzy. 'The lady had sent again, the affair is pressing, that likeness *must* be taken to-night. What *can* that young scamp be doing in the woods after sunset? Just like beggars on horseback. But it serves me right. If I hadn't been so very free with my money last night he couldn't have left the studio.' And as, grown furious with his own words, he turned to leave the room, he added: 'Now mind, I will give the young scapegrace another half-hour,' and he pulled out the horrid big turnip watch he always carries, 'and if he is not with me then, ma foi, I must get another of old Rabâche's boys to execute the job. It's a pity, too; only a sketch to be done in black chalk, can be executed in a few minutes, and so well paid! A duchess into the bargain, with no end of patronage in perspective.'"

And then my mother hurried me into the kitchen, all perplexed and bewildered as I still was, with eyelids drooping with fatigue and head racked with fever pains.

"Oh, mother, let me sleep!" exclaimed I, faintly, as I drew back towards the door of my own little bedroom. I had no power to utter more. The dear soul beheld in my repugnance to depart nothing more than a natural timidity, and urged me to hasten all the more; she tightened my cravat and brushed my hair. She sponged my forehead and slipped my Sunday paletôt over my soiled and stained blouse, while I was walking to and fro, literally reeling with sickness, and murmuring now and then as if in slumber.

"Oh, mother, *do* let me lie down and sleep, I dare not go to this place; mother dear, I cannot do what is required, I only want to sleep!"

Never shall I cease to wonder at the blindness evinced by my mother on this occasion. Maternal pride and maternal ambition must have been more powerful at that moment than even maternal tenderness, for my dear mother, at other times so anxious, so vigilant over the smallest indisposition, exaggerated even in her anticipations of evil, did not perceive that aught was amiss with me, that my brain was on fire, and that I could scarcely see. The dread of beholding her darling superseded in the luck which Fortune had thrown in his way had entirely absorbed every other feeling, and she literally pushed me out upon the stairs with a few gentle reproaches for my timidity, mended up by many kind words of encouragement, among which I remember still the prophecy that "my fortune had begun that night," and those words, so I have since been told, I repeated without ceasing for many days and many weeks afterwards.

I have no remembrance whatever of the visit to Nicol's shop, nor of the arrangement concerning the commission to be paid to him out of the job I was about to undertake, but I do remember the oval board and the box of chalks he placed in my hand to be used for the work. The address was in the Rue de Vaugirard, at the Hôtel Méréville. I scarcely know how I reached the place. I tottered rather than walked along the streets. Perhaps the fresh air of the night may have come once more to my relief, for as I lifted the huge knocker at the gate of the Hôtel Méréville, I succeeded in gathering together the scattered thoughts which had been chasing each other, as it were, over the surface of my brain, and by the time the gate was opened and I

had advanced to the vestibule, I fancied that my presence of mind was returning. It was evident that I had been waited for. The porter issued from his lodge the moment I appeared. He did not ask my name or inquire my business, but proceeded to light me up the stairs without the utterance of a single word. The vestibule was dark. The large globe lamps on each side of the entrance had not been lighted, but yet the unusual objects gathered at the foot of the stair could not fail to attract my attention. Huge rolls of black cloth and tressels, and strange-looking boxes, were gathered in unsightly heaps, indicative, as I thought, of that hurried departure on which such stress had been laid. The Hôtel Méréville is one of the oldest in the Rue de Vaugirard. Dark and gloomy perhaps, but grand and imposing in its aspect. The staircase up which I was ushered was sonorous and spacious; the tread of my footsteps seemed to bear a double echo, and their grating sound upon the stone irritated me beyond description. The walls were adorned with the pictures of gigantic size in vogue a couple of centuries ago, and the flame of the solitary light borne by my guide danced upon the canvas, making the personages represented thereon appear as if about to float out into space. Half-way up the stairs we were met by an elderly lady attired in deep mourning, with long trailing skirts and flowing veil, beneath whose folds the snow-white hair rippled and shone like molten silver. A small and delicate figure it was, yet evidently full of nerve and power, for she snatched the light from the porter's hand, and raised it to my face, as she said in a low, mysterious whisper:

"You are Monsieur Malabry," and in answer to my assenting bows, she added, "And I am the Duchesse de Méréville."

She paused, and then added in a murmuring tone while her breath seemed to catch between each word:

"Your instinct served you so well with the likeness of my dear Solange, that I thought you the best person for my poor Romuld."

The lamp was trembling in her hand, and the varying light it threw disclosed the changing shadows on the lady's face. Its agonised expression startled me so forcibly that it has remained engraven on my memory as the very realisation of utter despair, yet always as in connexion with the strange, mysterious dream of which, from the moment of my entrance into that old mansion, I sometimes feel even now as if I had been the sport.

"Yes, I must be dreaming," thought I. "This is what folks call a trance. Who was Solange, whose portrait I have taken? Whose voice was this which spoke to me of Romuld?"

The lady spoke not again—at least not aloud; for although her lips moved, no sound was audible, and with a strange, impatient gesture she motioned to me to follow her. I did not even pause to inquire the meaning of all this, but obeyed with that mechanical obedience one experiences in a vision. The long black skirts of the lady's dress swept noiselessly over the floor as we traversed the apartment. They were of some woollen stuff—ample and flowing—passing over the marble pavement of the ante-room without the smallest sound. The veil of transparent crape clung around her head and shoulders, leaving the outline of her whole figure shadowy and undefined. She moved with slowness and precision, and the old blood of France was as visible in her haughty tread as in her proud features, where the eyebrows of jetty blackness, contrasting with the bandeaux of snow-white hair, gave an expression of strong, stern will to her whole countenance. We crossed the ante-room, mute and with gliding step. Our lengthened shadows on the wall seemed alone to be in motion. Had not my racking headache still continued, I would have looked around with interest on the old family portraits which adorned the walls. But although in some degree relieved by the darkness, yet I still dwelt upon the idea of rest as the greatest blessing to be obtained.

We had passed thus through the dining-hall, marble-floored, lofty, and oak-panelled, —through the drawing-room, thickly carpeted and adorned with paintings let into the walls, amid such carving and gold embossing as future generations can never know. We arrived at a door covered with a heavy drapery of dark embroidered velvet, against which the outstretched hand of my conductress looked ghastly white. She was about to draw the drapery aside, when she turned abruptly round, and said to me in a sharp, thin voice:

"There is no need for me to enter the chamber. You will see your work at once. Nicol told you, doubtless, the circumstances under which you are called upon to execute the——"

She hesitated to find the word, and I

answered hastily: "Oh yes. I know. The gentleman is to depart to-morrow on a long journey. But—why cannot the portrait be delayed until his return?"

The lady started, and stared wildly into my face. She uttered a faint cry as of bitter pain; then, by a sudden movement, stepped aside, and her grasp of the curtain was so powerful that it was drawn aside by the movement, and I stood within the space between the two doors, which in these old houses of Paris separate the principal rooms from each other. The strangeness of the sight which burst upon me, and perhaps the sudden glare of light which greeted me, caused me also to reel backwards. I would have turned and fled, but the curtain had fallen behind me, and the lady was no more to be seen. The still and mournful dream, for it appeared so more than ever, amid which I was moving, seemed fast turning to nightmare; I gazed with mingled horror and amazement into the apartment before me. I stood transfixed, neither able to recede nor daring to advance. A powerful scent of many odours mixed together made me turn faint and sick —the strong perfume of violets, mingled with the nauseous vapour of heated wax, benumbing every sense, so that I felt as if my very reason were paralysed. The bed, contrary to our modern French custom, stood in the middle of the room. It was one of those large and solemn-looking baldaquin bedsteads, seldom seen except in the state apartments of old country châteaux. The heavy curtains of dark flowered tapestry were drawn aside, and all around the bed stood a row of lighted tapers in high silver sconces. Their flaming light, unsteady from the draught, seemed to rise and fall as it was thrown upon each object in turn, and not altogether bringing forward, as it were, the individual horrors of the scene one by one. Long flowing sheets were hung before the mirrors, and their ghastly whiteness contrasted with the dark hangings of the tapestry on the walls. A large fire was burning on the hearth, although the evening was so hot, and the ruddy flame of the huge logs upon the hearth danced upon the polished floor, and on every bright object in the room, making it now and then seem all aflame. Close by the chimney was seated, in a comfortable arm-chair, a priest, one of the lower order of ecclesiastics belonging to the nearest church, muttering, in a low monotonous tone, his prayers from the book he held at arm's length to catch the light from the fire. At the foot of the bed stood a table covered with a snow-white damask cloth, on which was standing a high silver vase, and upon it lay the long-handled goupillon used for sprinkling the holy water. On one side of the bed was kneeling a chorister boy, with white surplice and huge black cape, who seemed, by his immovable attitude, to have fallen asleep, with his forehead buried in the heavy drapery of the bed-curtain. On the other side knelt a sister of charity, the long sleeves of her gown of black serge stretched out, and serving to detach the edges of her stiffened coif from the sheet on which her head was reposing, her head bent so low, indeed, that her features were undiscernible. And —what was it that lay beneath the coverlet? The outline of a human form was but too evident. The folds of the sheet seemed to stand up sharp and aggressive, as if to leave no doubt upon the dullest imagination of the presence of the corpse hidden beneath them! I saw it all—the mystery was mystery no more. I had been sent for to take the portrait of one whose approaching "departure," as described by old Nicol, was not for a journey, but for the grave.

I remember placing my hands before my eyes, as the consciousness of my awful mission burst upon me. I remember murmuring in a low tone, as I thought, and with a sigh drawn from the depths of my bosom, "'Tis plain, I am destined no more to dwell among the living; my place henceforth is to be ever with the dead."

I could not have spoken in so low a murmur as I had imagined, or was it that the silence of the death-chamber was so great that every sound could be heard? for at the sob which burst from me as I spoke the words the priest turned suddenly round, and the little chorister's face, all flushed and swollen, was raised, while a grey-headed domestic advanced with tottering pace from behind the curtains, where he had been concealed, towards me. All seemed startled at my appearance amongst them, all stared at me with amazement, all save the sister of charity, and she remained undisturbed, but went on telling her beads, while her extended arms moved not, and her snow-white cornette remained rigid and motionless upon the bed. The domestic spoke to me with a sad but courteous greeting. I know he did, for his mild blue eye was fixed upon me and his lips moved, but I heard no sound. He took me by the hand and drew me towards the bed. I re-

sisted and turned to fly, but, as I turned, there stood close behind me the spectral figure of the Duchesse de Mérèville, who, with up-raised arm and gesture of command, signed to me with peremptory expression to advance. And I *did* move forward like a beaten hound, and took the seat which had been arranged for me at the bedside. For here, as well as below stairs, everything had been prepared for my arrival. The servant went round to the opposite side of the bed to that where I was seated. I dared not look upon the strange and awful model which had been provided for me, and I turned my gaze to the opposite wall. For a brief instant was the power of concentrating my ideas restored to me. All was deep and solemn mystery in the scene. There hung the picture of the girl with the dark red ribbon in her hair. My poitrinaire in a splendid frame surmounted with a wreath of immortelles, and I saw in an instant what was meant by my portrait of "Solange." The momentary diversion to my thoughts occasioned by the sight evidently must have delayed the catastrophe which had been impending over me ever since my first entrance into the mansion, for, after gazing on it intently, as though I now beheld it for the first time, I could collect myself sufficiently to unfold my drawing implements, and compel my courage to the horrible task required of me. The old servant stood by the pillow whereon lay the head of the corpse, and began slowly to raise the handkerchief which covered the face. His hand trembled so violently that the movement was slowly performed; so slowly, indeed, that the features of the dead man were disclosed one by one. And as the linen cloth was thus withdrawn by degrees, so did I feel my senses once more becoming gradually benumbed, frozen, as it were, beneath the icy chill of that overwhelming awe by which the very beating of my heart was stayed.

But strange to say I felt no surprise. As with the opium dreamer, that sentiment could exist no longer, and I started not, nor felt the slightest shock when, the handkerchief being wholly removed, the features of the youth I had beheld full of life in the early morning, dead before noon, were once more displayed in all their ghastly rigidity before me. Yes, there was the face, bearing still the same haughty, supercilious expression as in life, the same lank masses of chestnut hair lying all abroad upon the pillow just as they had floated round his face when his head lay back against the lining of the coucou, the parted lips, and the half-closed eyelids were just as I had seen them during that fatal drive. I felt that I had been clutched in the cold implacable grasp of Fate, and struggled no more to free myself. The old servant, careful and officious, held the light close to the visage of the corpse, removing the crucifix which lay upon the breast with the wreath of violets to a greater distance, and asking for approval of the attention. But I could not speak, nor could I even make the sign of approbation he required, for my whole frame seemed turned to stone, and life itself to have centred in my burning brain. I drew the first strokes of the outline; they were true to nature, and I grew more bold, seeking to overcome, by the power of will, the horror and disgust with which my whole being was pervaded. My pencil dashed along valiantly, and although my hands had grown icy cold, and my eyes were beginning to see every object before me as through a veil, the likeness of the dead man gave gradual promise of becoming perfect.

It would seem as if even under the most trying circumstances there must be some peculiar interest attached to the progress of a picture; for after awhile I became conscious that the priest had left his prayers to lean over me; his head weighed heavily on my shoulder, and the odour of snuff and stale garlic, with which his garments were impregnated, was in itself sufficient to create the nausea, which never left me for months, and which even now is connected in my mind with the odour of violets. The little chorister had left his station by the bedside to come and crouch by my chair, leaning his whole weight upon my knees, and causing the drawing to slide forward every now and then from my grasp. The sister of charity alone remained faithful to her post, her head still bent low, and buried in the sheet, the beads of her rosary rattling between her long, thin fingers, and still breaking the hard, stiff outline of the figure on the bed with the outline, harder still, of the starched wings of her cornette. The breath of my two human burdens came hot and strong upon my face, and almost stifled me. I felt that my consciousness was again deserting me, and other images floating before my sight than those actually before me. I drew lines upon the paper here and there, I scarce knew how or where. Who was it whispered, "See, see, what is it he is drawing?" Who was it

answered, in a low whisper too, "Look, look, it is a fly! there—behold—he is drawing it again; why now—only see—he is drawing it once more. Just look—one—two—three, he is covering the board with them?" Who was it again who called out in a louder tone, "Nay, you are leaning over him too heavily; you prevent his very breathing—he will faint—give him air, for God's sake?" The exclamation recalled me to myself. I summoned all my courage to rid myself from the oppression of my obtrusive companions, and by a rough gesture made them both slide heavily to a distance along the polished floor. At that moment the brusque movement I had made must have caused the old man to start, for he suddenly brought the light close to the dead man's face, and there, upon the forehead—by all the powers of Heaven!—was the deadly bluebottle fly, which had pursued the murdered man with such mysterious and fiendish tenacity even unto death, nay, even beyond, for his very corpse was not suffered to remain in peace!

With the gesture of a madman I started to my feet, dashing my drawing to the floor, and rushing towards the bed, having no other thought, no other aim, than the extermination of the fiend I felt sure would follow the corpse down into the very grave. But the aged attendant, weak and dim-sighted as he was, had beheld it too, and with trembling hand was seeking to brush it reverently away. The shrill, wheezing noise, and the loud and angry buzz which had grown so familiar, yet so ominous to my ear, were heard once more. But this time the madness which had been smouldering all day, burst forth without restraint, beyond control. I leaped into the air, while an unearthly shriek, or rather yell, echoed through the apartment, and—so they have told me since—was followed by a tremendous oath, unholy at all times, but doubly so in its awful effect, uttered thus in the presence of the dead! An exclamation of agony burst from the lips of the priest, and a low cry of anguish from those of the sister of charity, aroused at last from her devotions by this apparent visitation of some unhallowed spirit. But the madness had declared itself, and was now beyond all human control, and I was utterly unconscious of the confusion and dismay of those around me seeking in vain to hold me down as I bounded, like one possessed, from one end of the room to the other, upsetting the tapers, and leaping over the furniture in chase of the bluebottle fly, whose flight through every corner of the room could be traced by its loud and startled buzz, while I followed in pursuit, reckless of the destruction of every obstacle in my path, heedless of the loud crash of china and glass, of the terrified screams of those who witnessed the awful scene, urged onwards by the sole resolve to crush the obnoxious creature out of sight, at once and for ever, shrieking out as I rushed backwards and forwards from the door to the fireplace, from the window to the wall, in that insane, fantastic chase:

"Avaunt, thou fiend, to whom the life-blood itself is not sufficient prey! Canst thou not leave the dead to the devouring grave? Must thou dispute, with loud brazen trumpet, the right of the silent worm? Ah! thou shalt not escape this time. Help me, oh reverend father! Seize him, boy. Look, he is seeking to fly out by the window. Nay, see, he is now running along the head-gear of the sister of charity!"

I have remembrance of a heavy blow dealt with all the strength of my arm—of the cry of horror which echoed through the chamber as the sister sank to the floor—of the sensation of some living thing struggling within my fierce grip, and of the vivid pain which shot through my whole frame as it was crushed against my burning palm, as though I had seized the head of some monstrous snake, whose deadly fangs had fastened on my flesh—and I remember nothing more, save the wild triumphant laugh with which I fell backwards against the fender, and the sudden darkness that succeeded to the red and fiery glare which had seemed to envelop every object during the unearthly chase of the fly. The whole household had been aroused, and the whole apartment was filled with the servants, who came flocking from all parts of the mansion, terrified at the noise proceeding thus from the death-chamber. I was borne home, a raving maniac, to my mother; and so violent was the state of madness into which I had been thrown, that, by the doctor's stern command, I was conveyed to the hospital, as the worthy man, who had always been a friend of our family, declared that he could not be answerable for a patient in such a state, whose window on the fifth story looked out upon the pavement of the street.

And my mother wept sorrowfully, and, bowing her head, submitted to the decree. But she followed me, giving up her home and all her cherished household gods, so that if the power of recognition were ever

to be restored, her face might be the first to greet me. For more than forty days and nights did she watch me with unwearied care, and when the convalescence, worse than the disease, declared itself, she bore that, too, without a murmur. She has sat in a darkened room for days and weeks together, silent and motionless by my side, holding my hand in hers to quiet the fancy which had seized upon me that I was about to fall into the yawning precipice which, in spite of the utter obscurity, I could distinctly behold for ever opened at my feet. Had I not felt the warm and earnest pressure of her grasp, I should have fallen into the dark tide of despair—that dread follower of brain fever, more frightful than its wildest paroxysms. It was only during the rare intervals when I slept that she durst move from the painful torture to which my insane fury had condemned her. During the bitter trial of those weary days and nights her frame grew bent and aged, and her brow grew wrinkled before her time; yet her soul seemed steeped in a very bath of youth and sunshine, and she it was who brought back to me the hope and trust which of right should have been mine, but which, without her help, I should have lost for ever!

When my mother had thus snatched me from the jaws of the tomb, and the doctors had pronounced my cure a miracle, we left Paris for awhile, and lived in utter solitude in the country. I was happily free from any anxiety on the score of money, for the poor Duchesse de Méréville, who died just as I began to recover strength, left me a small sum to enable me to pursue my studies for a year, "without disquietude or anxiety as to the subject of his daily bread, not wishing," the poor lady said, "to make him a rich man, but a good painter." So I resumed my pencil and palette, and as memory brought back the events of my dread "holiday" at Meudon, so did Nature whisper again to me the secret she had confided to me beneath the White Thorn. My mother could easily understand why I would never venture on the painting of another portrait. The likeness of the dead Count de Sorgerac was the last I ever essayed to draw, and I feel that, were I to attempt another, that dead pale face would arise beneath my pencil. So that the study of landscape seemed to come as a natural consequence of the long country walks which brought back my health and strength, completing the cure my dear mother had begun. My success—for I have been successful beyond my deserts—has been her reward.

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER VI. MR. DERABOLE SHOWS HIS HAND.

Every two or three years, at greater or less intervals, there comes upon the City of London a something which may or may not be the precursor of a panic, but which, in itself, is a species of blight with very gloomy influences. It spreads from the highest to the lowest, from the magnates who meet in the Bank parlour, to settle the rate of discount, down to the copying clerks and the office lads at fifteen shillings a week. The brokers and jobbers come on 'Change earlier, and remain considerably later than usual; anxious telegrams, couched in mysterious language, flash to and fro between the metropolis and the great centres of commerce, the City editors of newspapers, mysterious men, whose ordinary communications to the journal by which they are employed are only made through their clerks, then appear in person, in the dingy penetralia of Fleet-street, and the intelligence which they convey is as carefully weighed and as jealously printed as the leakage of the deliberations of a cabinet.

Some such state of affairs exists at the present moment. See the roofs of the inward-bound suburban omnibuses, masses of waving newspaper broadsides, in which are buried the clerks who are devouring their contents; hear the hum which buzzes through every chop-house and tavern within a mile of the Royal Exchange; chop-houses and taverns, at this autumnal time of the year usually deserted, but now overflowing, as in high mid-winter, with a crowd of eating, drinking, talking guests. See the homeward-bound continental steamers and the London hurrying trains crammed with chairmen, directors, managers, secretaries, and staff, who have been away pleasure-seeking on their annual holiday, but are summoned back to duty by the first breath of the note of danger. See the one-eyed appearance of the houses in Belgravia and Tyburnia, to which the master has returned alone—leaving his family in the German gambling-place, on the Italian lake, or by the English seaboard—and where he shivers

amidst the holland-covered furniture of the gloomy dining-room, slips about in the carpetless bedroom, and tosses in the ill-made bed, "done for" by the fluffy female in charge of the house. See the chambers only half painted, and the lodgings with temporary denizens inducted into them, to the horror of the regular tenants who have unexpectedly returned. See the dreary days and long nights intended to have been spent in sketching-parties, and picnic-parties, and flirtations; on Swiss mountains; in looking on at the board of green cloth, and watching the spinning ball, or the shuffled cards; in bathing, and boating, and pleasure-taking generally; but now condemned to be passed over deeds and ledgers, in file biting and hair splitting, and wondering when the worst will come, and how it is to be met.

The Bank rate of discount has gone up two per cent, money is tight, and several old-established houses are declared to be "cranky." As for the new companies, which came into notice two years ago, in the first blush of the "promoting" period, eight or nine of them have gone already. Little Mr. Grimmer, the celebrated bankruptcy attorney, now staying down at Margate, where he has taken a house on the Fort, and where his phaeton and pair are the admiration of the neighbourhood, reads the money article of the evening paper with infinite gusto, and instructs his youngest daughter, whom he idolises, to mix him another glass of whisky-and-water, to which a portion of the news he re-peruses as he drinks it adds a lemony flavour. No need for Mr. Grimmer to hurry up to town yet: his clerks know when his presence is required, and can summon him by telegraph. Meanwhile let him ozonise his wiry little body as much as possible, and rest his busy brain. There will be plenty of work for him when Term begins in November, when, in the Bankruptcy Court, the "judges are met—a terrible show"—and when "dividend deferred," and "applications to register," "trustees' releases," and all the jargon of the court shall mean costs, and costs, and costs, all to be added by Mr. Grimmer to the heap already put away in store for the sole benefit of his bright-eyed little daughter.

Amidst the smashes which were resounding on every side no harm had yet come to the Terra del Fuegos Mining Company. Several apparently flourishing speculations, originally promoted by Philip Vane, and to the floating of which Mr. Delabole had lent a hand, had gone to unutterable grief. These two worthies had long since seceded from them, and their places had been filled by men of minor capacity and considerably less courage. Men who pottered when they ought to have struck, and struck when they ought to have delayed; inferior beings, whose fate was dismissed by Mr. Delabole with a shoulder-shrug, and by Mr. Vane with a contemptuous oath. But the Terra del Fuegos stood firm at a time when every public company in London was under the harrow of discussion, and, so far as possible, examination. It may be imagined that it did not escape its share of censorious gossip. Clerks will talk; even such intensely respectable men as those, old and young, employed under Mr. Vane. What the clerks said was merely this. That whereas the letters and reports from the mines, after having been read by the general manager and the board, were usually sent into the outer office to be copied, those recently received had been detained by the general manager. On its being further debated amongst the clerks whether these reports had been submitted to the directors or read and bottled by the "Toff" and "Pod," names by which Mr. Vane and Mr. Delabole were distinguished by their subordinates, the question being put to the vote, it was carried by a majority that the reports *had* been read and bottled by the said T. and P. It is further noticed by the employés that the "Pod" had been away from London for a fortnight, and that the "Toff," who had returned from his short holiday, and was on duty again, had been constantly in receipt of telegrams, which scarcely seemed to improve his temper.

But there were other signs of coming squalls which the respectable clerks did not notice, but to which the initiated might well pay attention. Little Mr. Naseby, for the first time in his life, drove down to the City offices of the company, in which he held so large a stake. He asked for Mr. Delabole, but, in that gentleman's absence, was ushered in to Mr. Philip Vane. His manner was wearied and languid, soft and sybaritic as usual; but the questions he put to the general manager were keen and probing. Mr. Vane had seen Mr. Naseby before, knew that he enjoyed Delabole's confidence, knew also that he was a perfumer in Bond-street. Dissatisfied with Delabole for the moment, and with Mrs. Bendixen's immediately-to-be-touched sixty thousand pounds before his eyes, Philip Vane thought

fit to snub Mr. Naseby, and to reply, first vaguely, and then insolently, to the queries put to him. Nothing could be better bred than the little perfumer's manner; a short dry cough was his strongest deprecation of the treatment which he received. He bowed himself out politely, and took off his hat to the clerks generally as he passed through the outer office. But on his way to the West End he stopped his brougham in Throgmorton-street, and instructed his brokers, Messrs. Bullen and Baren, to sell out every share he possessed in the Terra del Fuegos Silver Mining Company.

Mr. Parkinson, of Thavies Inn, was also considerably disquieted at the aspect of affairs, and the government office clerks and the financially hampered barristers who attended at his chambers for the purpose of money-borrowing, found him more than ever astonished at the nature of their requests, and more than ever disinclined, as they phrased it, "to part." Mr. Parkinson, knowing himself to be a vulgar, weak, and irritable man, wisely refrained from visiting the City office, where Philip Vane would, he was perfectly certain, have probed each of his tenderest sores, and probably exasperated him into committing himself. But he found means of communicating with Mr. Delabole, with whom he had an intimate acquaintance of many years' standing, and the replies which he received from that gentleman, though short, were so extremely irritating, that Mrs. Parkinson expressed herself roundly on his domestic bearing, and even the vicar hinted that his churchwarden was more prompt to anger than he had supposed. And there were other directors and shareholders who, many personally and some by letter, were worrying the office to know how matters stood, and asking for information which was in no degree imparted to them.

All this time Philip Vane was to be found at his post, attending to business with the greatest regularity, seeing everybody who desired admittance to him, and saying to each and all of them as little as possible. From the hour of his initiation into a high City position, he had dropped his soft, specious, pleasant manner, and adopted a sharp, curt tone, partly because he thought it was business-like, partly to save time, which now was really valuable to him. But since this gloom had settled down upon the financial world, his tone had become more curt than ever. He returned the briefest answers to all questions put to him, and when any visitors were shown in to him, invariably stood up, that the new comers might not have any excuse for sitting down.

"Good morning," he echoed, on the tenth day of the pressure, after a fussy old retired admiral, who had just taken his leave, "and be hanged to you," he added, as he saw the door safely close. "That's the fifth man I have seen during the quarter of an hour I have been here, and I have not had time to look at my letters yet." He sat down at his desk and began rapidly sorting into two divisions the large mass of papers which lay upon it. The larger of these two divisions he sent into the outer office by a clerk summoned for the purpose, while he ran his eye again over the smaller ones, and selected therefrom one letter for immediate perusal. It was very short, but its contents seemed to be satisfactory. "At last," he muttered, as he placed the letter carefully in the breast-pocket of his coat, "at last I am to obtain a little relief from this perpetual wear and tear of body and soul. He is coming back to-morrow, he says, and I shall put it plainly to him at once that my marriage must be no longer postponed, no matter what might be the consequences. He will oppose it, I know that, urging as his reason the panic and the dubious information last received from the mines, but I am determined not to be put off any longer. In—I was going to say in gratitude to him, but I do not think there is much of that in my composition—in deference to his wishes, that's a better phrase, I have postponed it two or three times, partly because he has undoubtedly done me many good turns, and may have the opportunity of doing me many more, and partly because he has, or had, strong influence with Mrs. Bendixen, which he might have used against me. If, however, I judge women rightly—and I ought to be able to, if experience is of any use in such matters—from what I have noticed of the widow during the last few days, I may safely pit myself against that or any other influence. There is no question of giving me up, the boot is on the other leg, by George; all she seems afraid of is of losing me. Wonderful how extraordinary attentive, and all that kind of thing, she has been since she came back from the Isle of Wight; never seems to like to let me out of her sight, and remains in London during all this beastly muggy weather for the mere sake of seeing me every day. Odd, but gratifying—uncommonly gratifying." And, from the mere

force of habit, Mr. Vane opened a drawer in his desk, and took from it a hand-mirror, into which he looked for some moments at the bright black eyes, and the sound pearly teeth, and the close-cut beard, which had worked so potent a charm.

"Yes," he added, as he replaced the glass and closed the drawer, "I think I could defy my friend Delabole, if there were to come any split between us. He might counsel the widow, but I should carry her off. She would thank him; she would cling to me. With the chances before me, I will defy any one in the world, except——" And a cold shiver ran through him as the thought passed across his brain —"except that parson at Springside. I have contrived to keep the thought of that cursed fellow, and all he said, well under, but it will surge up from time to time. Yes, if he were quieted I should be perfectly safe; for Madge, beyond confessing it to him, has evidently neither the application nor the inclination to take any further steps. Perhaps she does not even know anything about my intended marriage. This man Drage learned it doubtless from that infernal paragraph in the paper; but Madge never used to read any papers except the Haresfoot, and it would scarcely be in that. I wonder," he thought to himself, leaning back in his chair dreamily, and plunging his hands into his pockets, "where Madge is and what she is doing! I never could see her name in any London playbill, or hear of any one at all resembling her. How did this parson come to know her? How did he become so intimate with her that she should confide to him that great secret? He may be the chaplain of some hospital, and she may have told him when she was very ill! Perhaps she's dead! I never thought of that." And for the first time since his separation from her, Philip Vane had a kindly recollecton of the young wife whom he had deserted years ago.

He was roused from his reverie by a rap at the door, followed by the entrance of a clerk, who laid a card upon the table, and was bidden to usher the visitor in. The visitor when he entered happened to be Doctor Asprey, dressed, as usual, with scrupulous care, soft, bland, and placid. The clerk placed a chair for Doctor Asprey, who was not one of those clients whom the general manager received standing. Even if the doctor had not been, as he was, an intimate and constant visitor at the office, he was not the style of man whom one could have treated with such impertinence.

"And what brings you into the City to-day, Doctor Asprey," asked Philip Vane, when they had exchanged salutations, "after being so recently here? You are not one of those gobemouches who come down to pick up rumours that they may repeat at evening-paper time in their clubs, nor are you 'our own artist,' commissioned to sketch the scene of the panic for one of the illustrated journals."

"No," said the doctor, with a quiet smile, "I do not aspire to any such high position. I simply looked in to know if you had heard anything of Delabole; if you had any precise information as to the date of his return."

"I had a letter from him this morning," replied Vane, "in which he says he shall be back without fail to-morrow."

"To-morrow, good," said the doctor, with the slightest manifestation of relief at the intelligence. "I am glad to hear it, but I should not have come into the City on purpose, even to make this inquiry. The fact is, I was summoned down to a very special meeting of the board of the insurance office opposite, the Friendly Grasp, to which I am consulting physician. An awkward business; a widow has made claim for seven thousand pounds, the sum for which her husband was insured."

"There is nothing strange in that surely, my dear doctor," said Philip Vane, smiling.

"Nothing at all," said the doctor. "One noticeable feature in the case is, that the directors know that the man was poisoned, but there is nothing particularly strange in that."

"Know he was poisoned! They suspect so, you mean."

"They know it, my dear sir. I know it. I am as morally certain of it as I am that you are talking to me now."

"And whom do they imagine to be the murderer?"

"The widow," said the doctor, quietly, "and an accomplice, a young man, a general practitioner, whom, it is said, she is about to marry."

"The insurance office will fight the case, of course?" asked Vane.

"I think not. I strongly counselled them not, as it is comparatively a young office; and I strongly advised them to wait for some future case before coming before the public with a prosecution."

"Some future case! Do you mean to say these things are of common occurrence?"

"My good sir, there are hundreds of

cases every year in which men and women are murdered, and of which nothing is known. I would undertake to kill you with a poison of which no trace should ever be discovered, to stab you in a vital part, so that you should die instantly, and there should scarcely be a drop of blood to tell where you had been hit. My dear Mr. Vane, I am horrifying you with my professional talk. You look positively unnerved."

"Not at all," stammered Philip Vane. "I am intensely interested. Pray continue. You were saying that——"

"Not another word to-day," said the doctor, rising. "I must run off; I must, indeed. I shall see you to-morrow, when I look in to talk to Delabole. Now, adieu." He shook hands politely, but formally, with the general manager, and took his departure.

And Mr. Philip Vane remained for an hour motionless, passive, and chewing the cud of the reflections which Doctor Asprey's words had aroused in his mind.

The next day Mr. Delabole arrived at the office. The very sight of him inspired the clerks, and such of the public as were doing business in the outer office, with hope and comfort. His eyes were bright, his cheeks flushed with health, his manner jaunty. His diamond rings blazed as he waved his fat, white, little hand in courteous acknowledgment of his subordinates' greeting. The hall-porter essayed to precede him, but Mr. Delabole was much too quick for the plethoric functionary, and made his own way into the general manager's room, into which he passed, after a sharp decisive rap.

Philip Vane was seated at his desk, up to his elbows in an accumulated mass of paper. The sight seemed to afford Mr. Delabole some amusement, as he burst into a low but very hearty laugh at once.

"Hallo!" said Vane, looking up from his work, "it is you, is it; the prodigal returned? Glad you seem amused. You would have found it anything but a laughing matter if you had been here. It has been all very fine for you, spending your substance in riotous living, but deuced hard lines for us who have had to champ away at these husks," pointing to the papers, "which the swine refused to swallow."

"How charmingly scriptural and poetic is the dear boy in his illustrations," murmured Mr. Delabole. "Yes, Philip, I have returned!"

"Not before it was time," growled Mr. Vane.

"Exactly, but not after; in the very nick."

"I am glad you think so," said Vane, gloomily. "But you were not beforehand, you will at least acknowledge, when you have read this." And he handed a note across the table.

"Naseby—resigns directorship, no longer qualified—has sold shares. I was aware of this; I received this news by telegram the night before last. Hence my letter to you of yesterday—my return to-day."

"Oh! then you do feel it of importance. I am glad to think you are impressed with the facts. From the first blush of your manner you appeared to me determined to carry everything off with a high hand."

"My dear friend Vane, I am always impressible by facts, and what you mean by carrying off matters with a high hand, is simply that I keep my wits about me, and am not downcast by trifles."

"The rats are leaving the sinking ship," said Vane, sententiously, pointing to the letter.

"A very inapt illustration," retorted Delabole. "In the first place, the ship is not sinking; in the second, this particular rat was hunted out of it through a mistake of the officer left in charge."

"You are alluding to me?" asked Philip Vane, flushing with rage.

"I am alluding to you, my dear Philip," replied Delabole, quietly, "and to no one else. Naseby came here for certain information. He is a wealthy but pompous little man; you ignored his wealth, and insulted his pomposity by your—pardon me, my dear Philip, I have not the advantages of your education, and can find no other word for it—by your misplaced 'cheek;' he retired in dudgeon, and threw up the whole concern."

"That's his version of the case, and——"

"That is my common-sense view of it. But there is no reason that it should form a cause of argument between us, as there are hundreds of other Nasebys, or equivalents to Naseby, in the world. All that we have to do is to get hold of them at once."

"Yes, that is all," said Philip Vane, with a sneer, "but is it easy?"

"Yes, it is not difficult, provided proper means are taken," said Mr. Delabole. "We must, all of us, throw ourselves heart and soul into the breach, and work our utmost until we have accomplished our ends."

"Yes," said Philip Vane. "It is well for you, who have just returned from a fortnight's holiday, to talk about working

your utmost, but I confess I am not able to second that admirable proposition. I have already twice postponed my marriage for your convenience, and I was only awaiting your return to fix an immediate day, and arrange for absenting myself from the City for some little time."

"I am greatly afraid, my dear Vane," said Mr. Delabole, firmly, but with perfect calmness, "that that cannot be."

"Cannot be!" repeated Vane, starting from his chair. "And why not?"

"Because," said Delabole, still calmly, "because the business of the office will not permit it."

"Business of the office be d——d!" said Vane, savagely. "What business is there that presses for which I am specially required?"

"A little matter involving peculiar nicety of handling," said Mr. Delabole, rising from his seat. "No one there," he continued, closing the door after he had opened it suddenly and looked out. "It is well to be particular both as regards eye-shot and ear-shot in these matters," he added, poking the escutcheon of the lock over the keyhole with his stick. "I see from the letter you sent me that our further application to Sir Geoffry Heriot has been fruitless and that he still refuses to sign the deed."

"That's so."

"In this crisis," said Mr. Delabole, "Irving's co-operation would be invaluable to us."

"That co-operation we shall never get."

"Unless Sir Geoffry gives us his signature," said Mr. Delabole, looking straight into the air before him, and playing with his watch-chain.

"He is a hard, inflexible man," said Philip Vane. "He will never give in!"

"Then," said Mr. Delabole, slowly, and with his eyes still in the air, "we must get somebody to get his signature for us."

"And that somebody——?"

"That somebody is you, my dear Philip," said Mr. Delabole, fixing his eyes on Vane's face, and pointing straight at him with his forefinger.

"I!" cried Vane, loudly; then lowering his voice in deference to a gesture from his companion, he added: "Do you think you will get me to do this job for you?"

"I am perfectly certain of it," retorted Delabole.

"You must bring some very special influence to bear upon me," said Vane, with a sneer.

"I intend to."

"May I ask what it is?"

"If you do, I answer you plainly. The loss of Mrs. Bendixen and her sixty thousand pounds."

"You overrate your influence in that quarter, my good sir," said Philip Vane, with a sigh of relief.

"It is not my influence, my good sir, but the influence of the law; the influence of the parish register of Chepstow Church, of Margaret Pierrepoint, your wife, the actress whom you went down to see by stealth at Wexeter, and whom I went down to see too; whose life I have tracked backward and forward, and whose life's history I have at my tongue's end. Do you wish further personal evidences? Shall I ring the bell for Gillman, whom I employed to work the case out for me, or do you acknowledge the authenticity of my information?"

"I acknowledge it," said Philip Vane, faintly," and will do what you require."

"Exactly," said Mr. Delabole, cheerfully. "We will discuss the matter later. Now, if you please, I will look through the minutes and see what has been going on while I have been away. Mr. Packham," he called out, putting his head into the outer office, "be good enough to bring the current minute-book."

The clerk speedily came with the minute-book and read out many entries to Delabole. But Philip Vane did not pay much attention to that proceeding. He was entirely engrossed in thinking over what Doctor Asprey had said to him that morning.

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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER X. MAY WITHOUT A LOVER.

MAY was now twenty years old, and she considered herself past her youth. She had known herself a tall young person since the age of fifteen, and five years make a long time to look back upon. She had now cast off the crazy imaginations of her earlier days, and settled down to serious middle age. She would have given a very bad account of her past life, if you could by any subtlety have entrapped her into talking about herself. She would have told you that she had been an idle, roving scapegrace, spending her time wandering over moors and haunting mountain caves, making acquaintance with rabbit-burrows and plovers' nests. She had cultivated the excitement of lurking in ambush for hours to watch the flights of an eagle, and the luxury of lying on her back in the long warm broom to enjoy with perfect ease the ecstasy of the lark. She had so lived among the animals and birds that she had made sisters and brothers of them in her own wild way, and believed that they sympathised with her thoughts, while she had a scent and instinct equal to their own. To be sure she had picked up a little learning by the way, but everything that was useful she had been apt to forget, whereas everything that was visionary and romantic had clung to her without effort upon her part. If she had got poetry by heart, and carefully studied portions of Shakespeare and other masters, it was for the pleasure that it gave her, and not through studious desires. Part of her delight in it was the reciting of passages aloud to the winds and the birds, while perched upon a rock in some of her favourite wildernesses. If she had read tales and romances with breathless excitement, it was that she found an unutterable interest in making her way into a world of life and movement, thronged with varieties of people who were in every way different from herself and Aunt Martha. If she devoured the Bible and the lives of saints, it was because they kindled a magnificent sense of awe within her, and made existence supernatural and heroic. She had composed wild psalms out of her own worshipping heart, and sung them up to the clouds as she tramped about the hills. She had gathered round her dogs, and tame rabbits, and jackdaws, and improvised long legends and romances for their benefit, in which figured crowds of motley characters, angels and devils, fairies and witches, heroes and villains, every beautiful embodiment of goodness, and ugly incarnation of wickedness. She had learned reading from curiosity, spelling from reading, grammar by observation, history in brilliant patches and pictures, and French and Italian by instinct, ear, and fancy. She picked up foreign languages as she picked up a tune. Geography, she would declare, had altogether slipped through her fingers, but she knew the names of most places, whether they were near or far away, and what kind of people were found living in them. She knew all about Australia, because Paul Finiston was there. In her rovings and questionings, readings and speculations, one idea had been uppermost in her mind. Life was a great mystery of joy. In order to penetrate it she climbed high rocks, battled with strong winds, consulted birds, beasts, and books, basked in the

sun, dreamed by the fireside, prayed, laughed, wept, talked, mused. And at last, when she had explored every outlet of her life to its extreme limits, and wrought herself up to a very high pitch of nervous fancy, Aunt Martha, who had been quietly observing her, spoke. It was now quite time that she should give up her childish freedom, and settle down into a useful, well-conducted young woman. On that occasion May had burst into passionate tears. The humdrum life that she was dreading had overtaken her. Time would not spare her to her dear wild life. On receiving her lecture she had disappeared instantly, and for the day. But in the evening she had presented herself in the parlour, tidy in person, serious, and ashamed. She was going to do all and be all that was expected of her.

So now May, being twenty years old, and having been for three years labouring earnestly to tame herself and walk in quiet ways, may be fairly said to have sown her wild oats. She wore housewifely clothing and smooth hair. She had put aside romances, and plays, and poems, and set herself to apply to graver studies. She took to making pastry, and spent a considerable time at her spinning-wheel. She relinquished her idea that an excessive joy was the object of life, and prayed night and morning to be delivered from her wild dreams and fancies. She even thought of a likely spot for her grave, and wondered if it could be possible she should live to be as old as Aunt Martha; and then perhaps live longer still. In the mean time she was good to her poor neighbours, and as helpful as she was able, and she kept up her intercourse with the animals and birds. When she went out of a morning to the sunny side of the ruin, and nestling in the ivy, stretched out a hand and made a cooing sound, then they all came round her, rabbits, and pheasants, and dogs, and ducks, and geese, and chickens, the calf, and the donkey, and the jackdaws from the belfry. Tame and wild they clustered about her, and fed at her feet, or out of her hand. But she petted them now as a superior being, not as formerly when she was only their companion and playfellow. The enactment of this scene was the one folly of her day, all the rest of the time being spent in serious behaviour and steady occupation. She was as staid and demure as any one could wish, or as any one could regret to see her. Miss Martha beheld the wholesome change in the girl, but thought all the time that the change was a little too extreme. Yet how was this to be avoided? What ought a young girl to be? Miss Martha looked back into her own youth, and sought in vain for any experience of her own which might apply to her niece. Miss Martha had never been imaginative. Where one young thing lives entirely with older people, in an atmosphere at once antiquated and still, romantic and wild, it is likely that the young spirit will be either too much oppressed or too much emancipated. Miss Martha did not quite see this, but she knew that a little change was sometimes wholesome for young people, and she wished that May had a little change.

Thus she had not given an absolute denial when Sir John had expressed a wish to see May at Camlough. She had conveyed the idea to the gentleman that, if the ladies of his family exerted themselves properly, she would not insist that the thing could not be done. May, on hearing of the matter, had looked a little frightened, and had said, very gravely, "I think I would rather not go." Yet a certain controlled excitement of expectation had evidently hung about her since.

On the day when Katherine came from Camlough to seek her, May, as it happened, was busy in the kitchen. Bridget was out for a holiday, and Miss Martha had stepped down to the meadow with old Nanny to hold counsel over a sickly cow. The sun was hot and strong, the yellow blind in the kitchen was down, and the window open. There was a pot of lavender and sweet marjoram on the window-sill, and the fire winked under the saucepans. The walls were glittering with tin implements, and in the middle of the red-tiled floor sat May, shelling peas into an earthen dish. She was smooth and neat, and looked suitable to the time and place in her apron and green gingham gown.

From fifteen to twenty May had gained in beauty. She was not of more than middle height, her figure full yet slender, and replete with all womanly curves and fair lines. Her features were hardly so much regular as harmonious, large enough for dignity, yet small enough for feminine grace. Her eyes had still that brown-purple hue which Paul Finiston had thought so lovely, still those circling tinges of shadow which had charmed the old monk. Her hair was black, with a tinge of brown in it, her complexion of a creamy fairness, which made the darkness of her eyes very

deep and striking, and a blush upon her face very perceptible and beautiful. Her mouth was, perhaps, the jewel of her face. Most lips can express joy in smiles and trouble in heaviness. It is a rarer thing to see a mouth which shows involuntarily all the subtle shades of feeling that hover between pleasure and pain, all the flickerings of fancy, perhaps the nervousness and steadfastness of a difficult courage. When you knew May awhile, you forgot about the redness of her lips and the loveliness of their curves. You thought more about their thousand unuttered revelations.

"What an odd, ridiculous place!" cried Katherine, as she and her cavalier rode up to the gate of Monasterlea. And there was more here to discern of grandness and quaintness than Miss Archbold could take note of in a week. An artist would have seen it in a glance. But Katherine was not an artist, and saw something very unfinished in the majestic ruin with the homely cottage in its arms; the picturesque confusion of crosses and rose-gardens, blooming hedges and black archways; the acres of mounded graveyard upon one side, and upon the other and further away, the cornfields and the sweet farm-lands. It is true she had seen the place long ago, but she had not then thought it so exceedingly inelegant.

"It is fine!" cried Christopher, with a touch of that enthusiasm which Katherine had never felt, but immediately relapsed into a strain which pleased her better. "You beautified the whole place when you visited it years ago," he said, raving rapturously as he received her into his arms from her saddle.

The door of Miss Martha's dwelling stood open, and the blinds were all down to keep out the heat. There was no one about, and it suited Miss Archbold's humour at the moment, rather to walk in without ceremony, than to stand knocking at the door. Meeting no one, she proceeded to explore the house, looking into rooms left and right, and perfectly unconcerned as to how the dwellers in the cottage might approve of her intrusion. A sweet mocking laugh from the passage came floating over her pea-pods and her dishes to May, who looked up with notice of something unusual in the house. And there stood Katherine and her lover in the doorway.

As May arose, with quickened eye and colour, in a pretty confusion to meet her, it must be confessed that Katherine received a shock. She had not counted on finding anything so lovely here; did not want anything so lovely at Camlough. But a moment passed, and the whisper of vanity had soothed and appeased her. She was more beautiful by far even than this; so much so, that there never could be rivalry between herself and this mountain-reared maiden. And in some sense the whisper spoke truth. As a mere piece of flesh and blood, as a statue of perfection to be measured and criticised, she was a handsomer creature than May.

"You have not forgotten me?" she said, smiling, and holding out both her pretty hands, while the folds of her riding-habit fell away from them, making graceful drapery all round her on the floor.

"No, indeed," said May, stepping forward to take the hands.

"This is not my first visit to Monasterlea," said Katherine, tenderly, "and I have very good reason to remember the first."

"She is changed," thought May, triumphantly. "And how beautiful she is! Now I should like to go to Camlough."

"Your aunt has promised you to us," said Katherine, "and I have come to know when we may expect you." And all the while Miss Archbold was wondering how May would look if she were not dressed like a housemaid.

"But she cannot have much wardrobe here," she calculated, "and we shall get her as she is."

"Aunt Martha is in the meadow," said May. "Shall we go out and meet her? It is a pretty walk."

"Christopher, Miss Mourne; Miss Mourne, Mr. Lee," said Katherine, and the three young people stepped out into the sunshine. And then May remembered that she had heard that Miss Archbold was engaged to be married to a wealthy young gentleman who was staying at the house. This was the second young gentleman whom May had ever spoken to, and naturally she compared him with the first. Mr. Lee was amiable and manly-looking enough, but he had not the countenance and bearing of Paul.

Miss Martha was still engaged in her conference with Nanny over the cow, when she saw the three young figures bearing down upon her from the gate into the fields.

"Ah, this is very pleasant; Miss Archbold herself," said Miss Martha. "May shall certainly go; it will do her a world of good. And I declare there is the pedlar coming across the hill. Nanny, run and

stop the pedlar. How lucky that he should come at this time."

CHAPTER XI. THE PEDLAR AT MONASTERLEA.

Two hours after, the parlour was all draped with the contents of the pedlar's pack, while the pedlar himself was being regaled in the kitchen, with Nanny piling his plate upon one hand, and Bridget coquetting with him on the other. Silks of many colours were festooned from the mantelpiece, the table, and a brilliant tabinet had been flung for display round Miss Martha's shoulders; May, meanwhile, leaning with her elbows on the back of an arm-chair, examined these splendours which had been spread out for her choice.

"Now, May, do look at this tartan silk," said Miss Martha, persuasively. "Nothing could be prettier with your dark hair."

"I'd rather have black, Aunt Martha."

"But you have nothing else nice except white muslin, child. You will make yourself look like a magpie."

"Not a magpie, Aunt Martha. Only a crow one day, and a gull or a pigeon the next. I needn't be a parrot, need I?"

"Well, well, have your own way. In my time young girls did not dress themselves in black, except for mourning."

"Have the tartan silk yourself, Aunt Martha."

"No, no, child, my day is over. But at least I am going to pick you a bunch of bright ribbons."

The pedlar was called in to disclose the prices of his wares. He was a well-made, rather gipsy-like young man, with a red-brown skin, bushy black beard, and thick black hair, almost covering his forehead. A pair of bright dark eyes shone from under his heavy brows. He wore a suit of grey frieze and a low-crowned hat, and he blushed under the brownness of his skin when ushered into the presence of the ladies. He shot one keen glance at May, where she stood leaning with her elbows on the back of her chair, and then drooped his eyes and blushed again, so that Miss Martha set him down in her mind at once as a highly appreciative, as well as modest young man. He was a stranger too, and she was curious to know where he had come from.

"Ahem! this is not our own pedlar, my dear?" she said to May, as if willing to be persuaded that her eyes had deceived her.

"No, aunt. We hope," said May, turning to the stranger, "that nothing has happened to our friend who has been coming here for years?"

"I hope not, madam," said the pedlar, with another delighted look at the young lady. "But to tell plain truth, I niver seen him in my life. I'm started this summer on my own account intirely."

"I hope you may have success, I am sure," said Miss Martha, speaking with hesitation, as she adjusted her spectacles on her nose. "But I am a little in doubt as to whether it will be honourable in me to give you my custom or not."

"That's as ye plase, ma'am," said the pedlar, readily. "I wouldn't intherfair for the world wid the business of another honest man. But if it would be suitin' ye at all to take anything I've got for this wanst, I'll give it to ye chape, and not be botherin' ye again."

"Very fair, very honourable, indeed," said Miss Martha, "and as we are at this moment in need of what you have brought us, we must be forgiven for not waiting for the older friend."

"I have jewellery," said the pedlar, producing a box. "Miss will excuse me, but I have got bright goold crosses, and han'-some pearl beads, far gayer nor yon black thing that she has hangin' round her neck."

"My cross," said May, quickly, and her hand went quickly to Paul's chain round her neck. "Thank you, you may put up your jewellery," she added. "This was given me by a friend, and I care for nothing finer."

The pedlar blushed again, no doubt at the severity of the rebuke, but was silenced, and plunged into the recesses of his pack for more treasures.

"Oh, my man, my good man," cried Miss Martha, as she looked over the price-list which he had put in her hand, "you will beggar yourself with the lowness of your prices. Silks like these cannot be sold at such a rate, I can tell you. We shall hardly see you coming back again if this is the way you intend to do business."

"Maybe not, ma'am, indeed," said the pedlar, tossing his head. "But in the mane time them is my prices. To take a penny more would be the ruin o' my conscience."

Miss Martha put her head on one side, and looked at the salesman with a troubled air. But there was something in his manner that disarmed suspicion.

"Prices may have fallen," she said to May, reflectively. "And now we can have a couple of these dainty chintzes."

"Thank ye, ma'am," said the pedlar, as, the purchases being made, he picked up

the money tendered him; "and now, could ye be guidin' me to the houses of the ginthry in the neighbourhood? I was thinkin' o' payin' a visit to Misther Finiston o' Tobereevil."

"I cannot say that I think you need be at the trouble of going there," said Miss Martha.

The pedlar had shouldered his pack, and turned to go away.

"The young man hasn't come back yet, I suppose?" he asked, pausing in the doorway, hat in hand.

"The young man?" repeated Miss Martha.

"Oh, ay! Young Paul Finiston, the nephew."

"Do you know him?" burst eagerly from both women in a breath.

"Know him? Ay!" said the pedlar, and tears rushed into his eyes as he looked from one to the other of the anxious faces before him. "At least I did know him—knew him a young boy when I was knockin' about Dublin. He wouldn't look at a guinea before he'd spend it on the pedlar's pack. Not if he had it, the poor gossoon! But men do change. Think ye, ladies, will he be a miser like his uncle? It's in the blood, so it is, they do say."

"It is not in *his* blood," said May, stoutly, squeezing her black cross in her hand. "He is our friend, and we do not like to hear such questions."

The pedlar here drooped his head in silence, so that his face could not be seen. "I ax your pardon," he said presently, in a very low voice.

"Oh, I am not angry," said May, heartily, "and he must not go away without some tea, Aunt Martha. Here, Bridget, Bridget, make the pedlar some tea!"

Bridget obeyed readily, and, after the pedlar was gone, appeared in the parlour with triumph on her face.

"Musha, then that's the gintlemanliest pedlar that iver walked these roads yet, ma'am dear! Sure Nannie an' me bought what little we could rache to; an' afther he was gone, what but two fine shawls should come flyin' through the winda! 'Presents for yez each!' says his voice outbye, but when we run to the door sorra sight o' him was to be seen!"

Miss Martha left off measuring the yards upon her fingers, and made a careful examination of the shawls.

"These are worth a guinea each if they are worth a penny. This is something very odd, no doubt," she said to May.

"You don't think the goods have been stolen, Aunt Martha?"

"My dear, I should be sorry to misjudge the young man. But I have a strong disinclination to put a needle in this silk."

"Don't then, Aunt Martha."

"But I must, you goose! If I were to go to jail for it afterwards, you must have your gown."

"Well, Aunt Martha, I don't think thieves are very generous. He could easily sell all he had at his prices."

"I don't know about letting the servants wear these shawls."

"But, Aunt Martha, then we must not touch the silk!"

BURIED HEARTS.

It is natural enough that the human heart—deemed by poets and philosophers to be the seat of our affections and passions, of our understanding and will, courage and conscience, by some men looked upon as the root of life itself—should have been considered by many of the dying in past times as a votive gift peculiarly sacred. And this feeling has been the cause in many instances of the burial of the heart apart from the place where the ashes of the body might repose.

Among the earliest instances of the separate mode of heart-burial is that of Henry the Second of England. After this luckless monarch expired in a passion of grief, before the altar of the church of Chinon, in 1189, his heart was interred at Fontevrault, but his body, from the nostrils of which tradition alleges blood to have dropped on the approach of his rebellious son Richard, was laid in a separate vault. From Fontevrault his heart, according to a statement in a public print, was brought a few years ago to Edinburgh, by Bishop Gillis, of that city. If so, where is it now?

When Richard Cœur de Lion fell beneath Gourdon's arrow at the siege of Chaluz, the gallant heart, which, in its greatness and mercy, inspired him to forgive, and even to reward the luckless archer, was, after his death, preserved in a casket in the treasury of that splendid cathedral which William the Conqueror built at Rouen; for Richard, by a last will, directed that his body should be interred in Fontevrault, "at the feet of his father, to testify his sorrow for the many uneasinesses he had created him during his lifetime." His bowels he bequeathed to Poictou

(Grafton has it Carlisle), and his heart to Normandy, out of his great love for the people thereof. Above the relic at Rouen there was erected an elaborate little shrine, which was demolished in 1738, but exactly a hundred years later the heart was found in its old place, and reinterred. It was again exhumed, however, cased in glass, and exhibited in the Musée des Antiquités of the city; but December, 1869, saw it once more replaced in the cathedral, with a leaden plate on the cover, bearing the inscription:

Hic jacet cor Ricardi Regis Anglorum.

So there finally lies the heart of him who, in chivalry, was the rival of Saladin and Philip Augustus, the hero of the historian and the novelist, and who was the idol of the English people for many a generation.

When this great crusader's nephew, Richard, Earl of Cornwall, and King of the Romans, died, after a stirring life—during which he formed a conspiracy against the king his father, then, like all the wild, pious, and bankrupt lords of those days, took a turn of service in the Holy Land, and next drew his sword in the battle fought at Lewes between Henry the Third and the confederate barons—his body was interred at Hayles, in Gloucestershire, but his heart was deposited at Rewley Abbey, near Oxford, while the heart of his son, who died before him, and for whose tragical fate he died of grief, was laid in Westminster Abbey in 1271.

Two successive holders of the see of Durham made votive offerings of their hearts to two different churches. The first of these was Richard Poore, previously Dean of Salisbury, Bishop of Chichester, and then of Durham, from 1228 to 1237. He was buried in the cathedral of his diocese, but his heart was sent to Tarrant, in Dorsetshire. A successor in the episcopate, Robert de Stitchell, who had formerly been Prior of Finchale, dying on his way home from the Council of Lyons, in 1274, was buried in Durham, but, at his own request, his heart was left behind, as a gift to the Benedictine convent near Arbepellis, in France. At Henley, in Yorkshire, in the old burial vault of the noble family of Bolton, there lies the leaden coffin of a female member of the house, who had died in France, and been brought from thence embalmed, and cased in lead. On the top of the coffin is deposited her heart in a kind of urn. The heart of Agnes Sorel was interred in the abbey of Jumieges.

In Scotland there have been several instances of the separate burial of the human heart. The earliest known is that connected with the founding and erection of Newabbey, or the abbey of Dulce Cor, in the stewartry of Kirkcudbright, by Derorgilla, daughter of Alan the Celtic Lord of Galloway, and wife of John Baliol, of Barnard Castle, father of the unpopular competitor for the Scottish crown. Baliol, to whom she was deeply attached, died an exile in France in 1269; but Derorgilla had his heart embalmed, and as the Scotichronicon records, "lokyt and bunden with sylver brycht;" and this relic so sad and grim she always carried about with her. In 1289, as death approached, when she was in her eightieth year, she directed that "this silent and daily companion in life for twenty years should be laid upon her bosom when she was buried in the abbey she had founded;" the beautiful old church, the secluded ruins of which now moulder by the bank of the Nith. For five centuries and more, in memory of her untiring affection, the place has been named locally the Abbey of Sweet-heart.

History and song have alike made us familiar with the last wish of Robert Bruce, the heroic King of Scotland, when, after two years of peace and contemplation, he died in the north, at Cardross. He desired that in part fulfilment of a vow he had made to march to Jerusalem, a purpose which the incessant war with England baffled, his heart should be laid in the church of the Holy Sepulchre, and on his death-bed he besought his old friend and faithful brother soldier, the good Sir James Douglas, to undertake that which was then a most arduous journey, and be the bearer of the relic. "And it is my command," he added, to quote Froissart, "that you do use that royal state and maintenance in your journey, both for yourself and your companions, that into whatever lands or cities you may come, all may know that ye have in charge, to bear beyond the seas, the heart of King Robert of Scotland."

Then all who stood around his bed began to weep, and Douglas replied:

"Assuredly, my liege, I do promise, by the faith which I owe to God and to the order of knighthood."

"Now praise be to God," said the king, "I shall die in peace."

It is a matter of history how Douglas departed on this errand with a train of knights, and, choosing to land on the Spanish coast, heard that Alphonso of

Leon and Castile was at war with Osman, the Moorish king of Granada. In the true spirit of the age, he could not resist the temptation of striking a blow for the Christian faith, and so joined the Spaniards. He led their van upon the plain of Theba, near the Andalusian frontier. In a silver casket at his neck he bore the heart of Bruce, which rashly and repeatedly he cast before him amid the Moors, crying:

"Now pass on as ye were wont, and Douglas, as of old, will follow thee or die."

And there he fell, together with Sir William Sinclair, of Roslin, Sir Robert and Walter Logan, of Restalrig, and others. Bruce's heart, instead of being taken to Jerusalem, was brought home by Sir Simon of Lee, and deposited in Melrose Abbey. Douglas was laid among his kindred in Liddesdale, and from thence forward "the bloody heart," surmounted by a crown, became the cognisance of all the Douglases in Scotland. Bruce was interred at Dunfermline; and when his skeleton was discovered in 1818, the breast-bone was found to have been sawn across to permit the removal of the heart, in accordance with the terms of his last will.

But of all the treasured hearts of the heroic or illustrious dead, none perhaps ever underwent so many marvellous adventures as that of James, Marquis of Montrose, who was executed by the Scottish Puritans in 1650.

On his body being interred among those of common criminals, by the side of a road leading southward from Edinburgh, his niece, the Lady Napier, whose castle of Merchiston still stands near the place, had the deal box in which the trunk of the corpse lay (the head and limbs had been sent to different towns in Scotland) opened in the night, and his heart, "which he had always promised at his death to leave her, as a mark of the affection she had ever felt towards him," was taken forth. It was secretly embalmed and enclosed in a little case of steel, made from the blade of that sword which Montrose had drawn for King Charles at the battles of Auldearn, Tippermuir, and Kilsythe. This case she placed in a gold filigree box that had been presented by the Doge of Venice to John Napier, of Merchiston, and she enclosed the whole in a silver urn which had been given to her husband by the great cavalier marquis before the Civil War. She sent this carefully guarded relic to the second marquis, afterwards first Duke of Montrose, who was then in exile with her husband; but it never reached either of them, being unfortunately lost by the bearer on the journey.

Years after all these actors in the drama of life had passed away, a gentleman of Gueldres, a friend of Francis, fifth Lord Napier (who died in 1773), recognised, in the collection of a Flemish virtuoso, by the coat-armorial and other engravings upon it, the identical gold filigree box belonging to the Napiers of Merchiston. The steel case was within it; but the silver urn was gone. The former "was the size and shape of an egg. It was opened by pressing down a little knob, as is done in opening a watchcase. Inside was a little parcel containing all that remained of Montrose's heart, wrapped in a piece of coarse cloth, and done over with a substance like glue." Restored by this friend to the Napiers, it was presented to Miss Hester Napier, by her father, Lord Francis, when his speculations in the Caledonian Canal and elsewhere led him to fear the sale of his patrimonial castle of Merchiston, and that he would lose all, even to this relic, on which he set so much store. Miss Napier took it with her on her marriage with Johnstone of Carnsalloch, and it accompanied her when she sailed for India with her husband. Off the Cape de Verd Isles their ship was attacked by Admiral de Suffrien, who was also bound for the East with five French sail of the line. In the engagement which ensued, Mrs. Johnstone, who refused to quit her husband's side on the quarter-deck, was wounded by a splinter in the arm, while carrying in her hand a reticule in which she had placed all her most valuable trinkets, and, among these, the heart of Montrose, as it was feared that the Indiaman would be taken by boarding Suffrien, however, was beaten off.

At Madura in India she had an urn made, like the old one to contain the heart, and on it was engraved, in Tamil and Telegu, a legend telling what it held. Her constant anxiety concerning its safety naturally caused a story to be spread concerning it among the Madrassees, who deemed it a powerful talisman. Thus it was stolen, and became the property of a chief; so the loyal heart that had beat proudly in so many Scottish battles, hung as an amulet at the neck of a Hindoo warrior. The latter, however, on hearing what it really was, generously restored it to its owner, and it was brought to Europe by the Johnstones on their return in 1792. In that year they were in France, when an edict

of the revolutionary government required all persons to surrender their plate and ornaments for the service of the sovereign people. Mrs. Johnstone intrusted the heart of Montrose to one of her English attendants named Knowles, that it might be secretly and safely conveyed to England; but the custodian died by the way; the relic was again lost, and heard of no more.

In the wall of an aisle of the old ruined church of Culross, there was found, not long ago, enclosed in a silver case of oval form, chased and engraved, the heart of Edward Bruce, second Lord Kinloss (ancestor of the Earls of Elgin), in his day a fiery and gallant young noble, who fought the famous duel with a kindred spirit, Sir Edward Sackville, afterwards Earl of Dorset, a conflict which is detailed at such length, and so quaintly, in No. 133 of the Guardian. Bruce was the challenger, and after a long and careful prearrangement, attended by their seconds and surgeons, they encountered each other, with the sword, minus their doublets, and in their shirt-sleeves, under the walls of Antwerp, in August, 1613. Sackville had a finger hewn off, and received three thrusts in his body, yet he contrived to pass his rapier twice, mortally, through the breast of his Scottish antagonist, who fell on his back, dying and choking with blood.

"I re-demanded of him," wrote Sir Edward, "if he would request his life; but it seemed he prized it not at so dear a rate to be beholden for it, bravely replying that 'he scorned it,' which answer of his was so noble and worthy, as I protest I could not find in my heart to offer him any more violence."

As Sackville was borne away fainting, he escaped, as he relates, "a great danger. Lord Bruce's surgeon, when nobody dreamt of it, came full at me with his lordship's sword, and had not mine, with my sword, interposed, I had been slain, although my Lord Bruce, weltering in his blood, and past all expectation of life, conformable to all his former carriage, which was undoubtedly noble, cried out 'Rascal, hold thy hand!'"

Sackville was borne to a neighbouring monastery to be cured, and died in 1652 of sorrow, it was alleged, for the death of Charles the First. Kinloss died on the ground where the duel was fought, and was buried in Antwerp; but his heart was sent home to the family vault, in the old abbey church, which lies so pleasantly half hidden among ancient trees, by the margin of the Forth; and a brass plate in the wall, with a detail of the catastrophe engraved upon it, still indicates its locality to the visitor.

Still more recently there was supposed to be found in the vault of the Maitlands, at St. Mary's Church, in Haddington, an urn containing the heart of the great but terrible duke, John of Lauderdale, the scourge of the Covenanters, a truculent peer, who, for his services to the powers that were, was created Baron Petersham and Earl of Guildford, and who died at Tunbridge Wells in 1682. He was buried in the family aisle, amid the execrations of the peasantry, to whom his character rendered him odious, and his coffin on tressels was long an object of grotesque terror to the truant urchin who peeped through the narrow slit that lighted the vault where the lords of Thirlstane lie. The heart of the unhappy king, James the Second of England, which was taken from his body, and interred separately in an urn, in the church of Sainte Marie de Chaillot, near Paris, was lost at the Revolution, in 1792, while the heart of his queen, Mary d'Este, of Modena, and that of their faithful friend and adherent, Mary Gordon, daughter of Lewis, Marquis of Huntley, and wife of James, Duke of Perth (whilom Lord Justice-General, and High Chancellor of Scotland), were long kept where the ashes of the latter still repose, in the pretty little chapel of the Scottish College, at Paris, in the Rue des Fossés St. Victoire, one of the oldest portions of the city.

When the body of the Emperor Napoleon was prepared for interment at St. Helena, in May, 1821, the heart was removed by a medical officer, to be soldered up in a separate case. Madame Bertrand, in her grief and enthusiasm, had made some vow, or expressed a vehement desire, to obtain possession of this as a precious relic, and the doctor, fearing that some trick might be played him, and his commission be thereby imperilled, kept it all night in his own room, and under his own eye, in a wine-glass. The noise of crystal breaking roused him, if not from sleep, at least from a waking doze, and he started forward, only in time to rescue the heart of the emperor from a huge brown rat, which was dragging it across the floor to its hole. It was rescued by the doctor, soldered up in a silver urn, filled with spirits, by Sergeant Abraham Millington, of the St. Helena Artillery, and placed in the coffin.

During the repair of Christ's Church, at Cork, in 1829, a human heart, in a leaden case, was found imbedded among the masonry; but to whom it had belonged, what was its story, the piety or love its owner wished to commemorate, no legend or inscription remained to tell.

In 1774, Sir Francis Dashwood, Lord Le Despenser, seems to have received the singular bequest of a human heart, as the obituaries of that year record, that when "Paul Whitehead, Esq., a gentleman much admired by the literati for his publications, died at his apartments in Henrietta-street, Covent Garden, among other whimsical legacies was his heart, which, with fifty pounds, he bequeathed to his lordship." But of all the relics on record, perhaps the most singular, if the story be true, is that related in the second volume of the memoirs of the Empress Josephine, published in 1829, when the Duc de Lauragnois had not only the heart of his wife, to whom he was tenderly devoted, but her entire body, "by some chemical process reduced to a sort of small stone, which was set in a ring, that the duke always wore on his finger." After this, who will say that the eighteenth century was not a romantic age?

FANCY FAIR AT MOPETOWN.

I HEAR it constantly repeated that Mopetown* is "at the back of Godspeed," a slough of despond, a hundred years behind the world, with other compliments of the same kind. Yet is it not a phenomenon, a Mopetownian might fairly ask, that so degenerate a place should, through the medium of its Rooms, exhibit all the turns and elements of civilisation? The very posters, if filed, would, to an antiquarian, furnish evidence of an almost epicurean luxury. For instance, when I last visited the place a fancy fair was being celebrated: a fair marvellously akin to other fairs in places of infinitely more pretension.

It was for Mrs. Towler's "Swallow's Nest." A bewildering term, yet it seemed familiar to every one. "Going to do something for the Nest?" "Shall give this to the Nest," "They will make a good deal for the Nest," were phrases that fluttered about one's ears like the wings of little birds. What did it mean? It seems that Mrs. Towler, though having a sovereign contempt for Mopetown, never buying even "a yard of ribbon" in the place—though I could not see how such a limited purchase could benefit its trade—still did not disdain to turn the wretched place to profit, when it suited her ends. She enjoyed the intimacy of the fashionable wife of a remote bishop, who viewed Mrs. Towler precisely as that lady viewed Mopetown, namely, as a sort of hind or serf, whom she could harness to her coach or make otherwise convenient. In her turn she was subservient to that dear Lady Mountattic, who combined balls and sermons, clergy and desirable young men, with an extraordinary harmony. It was she who was constructing the Swallow's Nest, a little retreat for the tiny sisters of the small boys "who ran about the streets," who were to be collected, washed, dressed in a pretty Watteau-like dress, shown to visitors, reared, and finally turned into picturesque dairy-maids. The Duchess of Blank had promised to take four, the Countess of Asterisk two, Lady A. one; in short, it was "charming;" so good, so nice, so romantic, so elegant, and so religious. The remote bishop had said "that a blessing would be upon the work," and St. Clair, a young architect of fashion, "who had altered Rookery Towers" (which was always quoted as though it had been a patent or a degree), had designed a charming little Gothic structure, like a bit of a scene in a play, the rooms in which had the air of tiny boudoirs. The noble and genteel ladies took the greatest delight in the scheme, and pictured the most charming little scenes in their dainty chambers, "teas," flirtations—picnicing almost.

Mrs. Towler, then, had started the bazaar. A number of ladies in the town—the doctor's lady, the bank manager's lady, the lady of the head of Simmons and Co.'s Drapery Mart, who, on other occasions, were never noticed, were glad to place themselves at the orders of the great personages. They were all to hold stalls. Mrs. Towler herself was to have one, on a sort of daïs or throne, which was, in fact, to be *the* stall; the others were mere little booths, just to fill up, or prevent an unpleasant sense of blankness. They were to get money from other sources; above all, not to sell much, as it was expected that every one was to buy exclusively at the grand lady's table.

It was my lot, then, to arrive at Mopetown on the very morning of this festival day. I passed by the Rooms, which I had now come to regard quite as an old friend.

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. vi., p. 610.

As usual, its boards reclined outside, in their favourite sloping attitude, and proclaiming "Fancy Fair for the Swallow's Nest. Under distinguished patronage"—the Bishop of Blackwall, and Mrs. Mountain, the Lady Hautboy, Mrs. Towler, Rev. Arthur Duffy, &c. As I was reading the names, a pink-faced, large-whiskered, good-humoured clergyman stopped to read also, and said, abruptly, "My name looks as well as any in those red capitals? That big A is like the trousers on the French soldiers, eh?"

I could not help smiling. "Oh, you are the Reverend Arthur Duffy, then?"

"They tell me so. Come, sir, we'll see you in it. If you only buy a cushion, or a pair of handscreens, you'll lay your head on your pillow with the reflection that you've fed a swallow or two for a day. Step in, my dear sir."

This gentleman seemed to be what is called a character. Before I could reply, he exclaimed, "I declare, the walking poker himself!"

I saw a prim, stiff, tall, dry-looking clergyman coming along, with an expression of disgust on his face.

"Well, Doctor Pitt," said the jovial clergyman, "you won't come in and raffle for the seal-skin cloak?"

Doctor Pitt replied: "I request, Mr. Duffy, you will not address me on the subject. You are too free, sir; much too free."

"Well, it's the land of freedom, you know, and as for addressing your reverence on the subject——"

"None of your buffoonery with me, sir," said Doctor Pitt, furiously. "Don't give me these ridiculous titles. You are going too far, Mr. Duffy, and will get yourself into a scrape."

I listened, quite amazed, to this altercation between two holy men—officially holy—a compliment at least owing to their white ties.

Mr. Duffy laughed when Doctor Pitt had passed on, and, with a strange confidence, explained the matter.

He and Pitt had taken opposite sides as to the bazaar. "That old stuck-up prig—whose very bowels were made of starch and buckram—had set himself against the bazaar from the beginning. He had opposed it, I can't say tooth and nail," added Mr. Duffy, "for he is only imperfectly furnished with those articles. It means opposing me. You must know, the people about here are handsome enough to say that my sermons are more entertaining than his. Jealousy has been known to reign in the breast even of the most holy. But step in, and let us see how the ladies are getting on."

We stepped in forthwith, I not a little puzzled by my new friend. It would be hard to give an idea of the almost commercial air of the Mopetown Rooms.

"We've done wonders in the time," said Mr. Duffy. "I was here half the night with the young ladies, hammering and tinkering, with an apron about me. Faith, it's the only apron they'll ever let me wear; and for that matter I've done more useful things in it than many a bishop would in his."

The place had quite a bustling air. The doors were about to open, and the fair shopkeepers had scurried to their places, thinking that we were the first instalment of the public. There were nine "establishments," four on each side, with a glorified one in the centre, a sort of arbour made out of pink calico and muslin, with a wreath at the centre of the arch. This was the Towler bower. The rest were exposed, as they should be, being mere plebeians, under the naked canopy of the ceiling. A card pinned at the side of each bore the names of the fair venders. The Towler stall was tenantless for the nonce.

My friend had left me, and, I saw, was almost at once surrounded by a number of flushed young ladies, whom in two or three seconds he had convulsed with laughter. I glanced leisurely round the stalls, and took note of each seller, enthroned behind a heap of coloured paper boxes, dolls, toys, cushions, antimacassars, some pieces of paper washed over in faint tones, and complimentarily described as "water-colour drawings," tea-caddies, slippers, &c.—things which I do not enumerate in any spirit of invidiousness as to Mopetown, for every one, I am sure, will admit they have seen precisely the same wares at sale-rooms in towns of greater fashion. Behind each table was a matron, more or less ugly, each assisted by a band of ladies—daughters, or friends' daughters—with, in most cases, a business-like looking spinster, of plain exterior, but who, I could see, was useful, had done all the hard work without recognition, and who was not meant to be recognised. Some Miss Smith, or Miss Jones, or Miss Wilkinson, in whose instance virtue, and the pride of bustle and of being useful, was to be its own reward. These human elements I have also noticed at other bazaars.

The platform on which so many entertainers had figured was occupied by the quadrille band of Mopetown—a scant company of musicians—a pianoforte, fiddle, German concertina, and cello, who were already tuning, but did not dare to begin until the Towlers arrived. There was a little structure half-way down the Mopetown Rooms of a curious sort, the purpose of which I could not so much as divine, and which I could only set down as a sort of refined Punch and Judy show. I noticed also some fussing men, who were always rushing about, and consulting with the matrons; and also some impetuous and high-coloured young girls, who, as it were, cantered about from stall to stall, carrying orders and despatches—female aides-de-camp. Some of the stall-holders were appallingly plebeian: Mrs. Muggins, Mrs. Shackford, Mrs. Bigger, Mrs. Briggs, and the like. There was, however, one showy, though not very refined-looking dame, a Mrs. Whelply, at whom I could see snortings and tossings of manes, as though it were some enemy that had got in among these fair creatures. I foresaw that she would be the most successful merchant of the day—that her wares would be swept away like magic, and that her own sex would be ready, as indeed they were now, to eat her.

Hark to a commotion at the doors, with a sound of carriage wheels! Instantly a number of both sexes, including the Reverend Arthur Duffy, with some of the stall-keepers, literally scampered down the room to the door. It was the committee, and the committee going to meet the august queen of the whole, Mrs. Towler. They reappeared in a moment two and two, the Reverend Arthur Duffy last, smiling and chattering, as he conducted two ladies, one gorgeously attired in yellow with very light bonnet strings and large bows, the other in pale slate-coloured satin, very prim, neat, and Quakeresque. Joy! here was a surprise. A murmur ran round, "The bishop's lady!" It seemed almost miraculous, the heavenly inspired suggestion which came to Mrs. Towler at the last moment. Perhaps the bishop's lady would not be offended, though the acquaintance was so slight—would she excuse the freedom, come down in person, and accept hospitality at Towlers? A crushing repulse might be anticipated for such a liberty. Strange to stay, the bishop's lady was gracious, indulgent, would overlook the affront, as some of these great people often do, so far, as to come for a day or so. Not of course for her own sake would she make such a sacrifice, but for the Swallow's Nest, where her heart was.

The sensation was indescribable, as may be well conceived, as the illustrious pair were led up. Every one crowded round, the stall-keepers stood up to gaze. The august party was led forthwith to the daïs, where the bishop's lady was duly enthroned in something almost like ecclesiastical state.

Soon after the public were admitted, orders having been given to throw open the doors, as though a vast crowd were struggling to force their way in. This operation was effected without inconvenience, and, beyond the mere fact of the opening, made no difference in the situation. There were no more persons in the building after the opening than before. All the fair stall-keepers were now in their places, and arrayed in the most seductive smiles.

Feeling some curiosity as to the result of this experiment, I returned in a couple of hours, and found that trade had much improved, and might, indeed, be called brisk. The room was tolerably full, all the aristocracy of Mopetown, who did not like to arrive before the fashionable hour, being present, though their dresses might have caused a little surprise in Rotten Row. Strange to say I could only make out some half a dozen gentlemen, apart from the committee men, as being present; and of these I could only set myself down and another as being what might be called "independent," that is, unconnected with the various shops and marts. I at once became an object of attention, that was inconvenient to myself in the highest degree, being, as it were, "spotted" as a stranger, and fairly baited and harried to a degree that made life almost insupportable. The young girls, whom I may call, I hope without unpoliteness, "touts" for various trading establishments, accosted me with the strangest freedom, and a manly familiarity. Every one had tickets—one had a pair of handscreens, another a wax doll arranged in wedding-dress. The trustee of the latter almost unsexed herself with the boldness of her importunities.

"Take a ticket for the bride, only a shilling each. Come, now, you won't refuse *me*."

Only a boor could refuse, and two were purchased. The exhibition of money thus paid out inflamed the emulation of others, and I was instantly mobbed by the handscreeners, the cushion, the antimacassars,

the fender stool. One lady caught hold of my arm; another, when I declined rather bluntly, fell back on ridicule and sarcasm to effect her purpose.

"Surely you can afford a sixpence or two; it won't break you, will it? I'm sure you wouldn't have come here without a few shillings in your pocket."

Even the proprietress of the bride, to whom I appealed, to my astonishment turned against me.

"Well, he needn't boast of that. Mr. Shank took ten shillings' worth yesterday! Come, take half a dozen tickets for the bride, and we'll let you off."

I felt that the free Mopetown young ladies could not be offended by a corresponding bearing, so keeping the demeanour of certain commercial gentlemen at the Dolphin well before me, I tried a little rustic repartee as a last desperate resource. "If they put *you* in a raffle, my dear," I said, with an engaging air, "I would take no end of tickets." This stroke had the happiest effect. Her boldness deserted her, and her voice grew faint. "Come," I went on, "if all these young ladies were thrown in as bridesmaids, I would go as far as five shillings a ticket." This produced a scare, and fluttered them all as Coriolanus did the Volscians. But I could not count upon impunity. The Reverend Mr. Duffy was down upon me in a moment.

"Come up to Mrs. Towler's table; they were asking me who you were. You must buy a nick-nack—it's expected—and it's only civility. Come now."

Mr. Duffy's arm was in mine, and in a moment he had dragged me up to the great ladies. They were gracious.

"What will you have?" the bishop's lady said. "The cigar-case? just the thing. Oh, and you must take the cushion. Five shillings, please. Every one that takes a ticket is entitled to the bishop's sermon on the Trinity. A 'Trinity,' dear, for this gentleman."

"That's right," said Mr. Duffy, maliguantly turning on me when he had gained his point, "pluck him, pillage him. He's rich, and has no friends. Come, sir, down with the rhino; the cigar-case is yours at two ten. What, you won't? Well, you *are* a millionaire!"

"Oh, Mr. Duffy, we don't ask so much. We'll let this gentleman have the case for a pound."

There was great disgust when this offer was declined; however, I was allowed to depart on taking a ticket for the cushion, and bore away my copy of the bishop's sermon.

I have no wish to hold up Mopetown in particular, for the reader will own that he has found a strange uniformity in human nature as to this matter of bazaar. Everywhere, as at Mopctown, the exhibition appears to call out a bold license, turning all the young creatures into a species of camp-followers, making them free, even impudent. On other occasions they are afraid to stir from mamma's side; now they will range public rooms in presence of crowds, and will familiarly accost perfect strangers with theatrical seduction. This seems to be common to all bazaars within and outside Mopetown. I should say the post-office device was the most demoralising feature of all. It obtained at Mopetown a highly elaborate shape, and I was informed that the damsels actually competed for the honour of being officials in the establishment—the publicity and the opportunity for exhibition were so favourable. At Mopetown there were a number of charming, but very forward "touts," who, in coquettish costume, acted the part the "bringer" does for the recruiting sergeant. These young creatures exercised all their wiles and fascinations to draw visitors to the post-office. "There is a letter for you, I know," one would say—"a letter from a lady you admire." The victim was then led off to a little green-baize office, with a pigeon-hole, where a charming but business-like young post-mistress was installed. The bringer, asking my name, which seemed strange, considering that she had assured me there was a letter waiting for me, duly informed the post-mistress, who, by way of carrying out the fiction of a poste restante, bent down as if to make a search among the despatches, but, in reality, to inscribe the inquirer's name on the envelope of a species of valentine. A shilling fee was charged for this trouble, and it is astonishing the amount of hysterical giggling and skittish simpering that attended on the childish transaction. The Reverend Mr. Duffy, however, revelled in the pastime, came again and again for letters, and was comic and good-humoured; but I noticed he never was charged any fee. There is an economy in thus being an agreeable cleric, and the gigglings and blushings which attended his remarks showed how popular he was.

Late in the day arrived a reinforcement, consisting of three or four officers from the detachment quartered close by, who had

been implored and cajoled by Mrs. Towler into attending. The sensation produced by these warriors was indescribable. They were followed with adoration, but they would have nothing to do with the post-office, or the fair post-mistress. In fact, I heard one of the party dismiss the suggestion with a sotto voce "rot!"—a word, I believe, of military slang, signifying abhorrence and disgust. But the popular feeling in their favour was changed into something like execration when it was discovered that the military gentlemen devoted themselves to the stall of the showy but low-born Mrs. Whelply — disdaining what they called "old Mother Towler's" show, with its episcopal attraction—and that from this lady they bought many cushions, dolls, and handscreens. Nay, horror! a young lady tout reported to Mrs. Towler and the committee that the odious Mrs. Whelply had consented to a proposal made by one of the young bloods:

"I'll give you a sov., Mrs. Whelply, for a cigar, if you promise to bite the end off."

Why, this was sheer impropriety! The woman would contaminate our young girls! What could you expect?—the woman had been a scheming governess.

Such was the fancy fair at Mopetown. In the evening an auction was held of all the unsold articles, which went little short of the articles originally on sale. The Reverend Mr. Duffy officiated as salesman, and convulsed everybody with his humour and spirits. But this seemed to have been the only result of his wit. Being held at the Mopetown Rooms, the fancy fair, as a matter of course, succumbed to the destiny that attended that place of exhibition. There was no pecuniary success—absolutely no profit.

AMONG THE SAND-HILLS.

Silence among the sand-hills.
Only the ceaseless roar,
The thundering roll of the sullen surge,
As lashed by the black north-easter's scourge,
It crashes upon the shore.

Quiet among the sand-hills.
Only the sea-mews fly,
Blending their shrill unceasing wail
With the ominous sob of the rising gale,
Flitting 'twixt sea and sky.

Dreary among the sand-hills.
The great grey sweep of waves,
As cold and as dull as the heavy sorrow,
That seems from the scene new strength to borrow,
To reckon the past's thick graves.

Lonely among the sand-hills.
In a helpless, hopeless woe,
While the wild birds cry and the wild winds moan,
And the white surf creeps over sand and stone,
And the great tides ebb and flow.

Lonely among the sand-hills.
Lonely where'er I be,
Oh vainly boasted power of song!
In my bitter need it can but prolong
The dirge of the desolate sea.

A TALE OF TOLEDO.

Never in all Spain was there so fascinating a gentleman as the young Andalusian, Don Juan de Aguilar. To express his power over hearts, the phrase "look and die" would be altogether inadequate; for the noblest ladies became desperately enamoured of him without having seen him at all, a mere description of his perfections sufficing to kindle the most ardent passion. His command of courtly language was alone sufficient to render him irresistible, without the attraction of his person, since there was not a tongue that had a greater command over those pretty conceits that were so much in vogue in the days of Philip the Third, than that of Don Juan de Aguilar. Moreover, he was so perfect a caballero, his fine sense of honour and his consciousness of lofty lineage were so plainly indicated by his features and his general bearing, that the proudest gentlemen no sooner set eyes on him, than they felt inclined to grasp his hand, and solemnly vow eternal friendship. If the description we have just given of Don Juan's qualities appears somewhat highly coloured, and if the sentiments expressed in the course of the following narrative seem somewhat constrained, it will be borne in mind that we are not speaking of modern Europe, but of Spain early in the seventeenth century, the period when the Spanish hidalgo combined an abandonment to the dictates of a passionate nature with obedience to an extremely artificial code of morality, after a fashion to which the history of the world affords no parallel.

Notwithstanding the great personal and mental advantages of Don Juan, few would have envied him, when he stood one fine day on the heights of the Castel de San Cervantes, in the vicinity of Toledo. The reputation of his sister had been compromised by a noble who was studying at the university of Seville, and who had basely fled to Toledo after winning her affections. Accordingly, without loss of time, Don Juan, like a noble caballero, set off from Seville in pursuit of the fugitive, whose blood, he was resolved, should wash out the stain on the family honour. When he had got as far as the castel, and paused

awhile to admire the reflection of its dark battlements in the Tagus, he saw two men, with swords in their hands, evidently on the point of engaging in mortal combat. The quickest-tempered gentleman can be pacific in a quarrel which is not his own, and Don Juan dismounted from his mule with the intention of preventing the threatened encounter. But he reached the scene of action a moment too late. Not only had swords been drawn, but one of the combatants had fallen to the ground, stricken by a mortal blow, before the intending peace-maker could put in so much as a conciliatory word. As for the victor, he was no sooner aware of the death of his adversary, than he retired hastily, and finding Don Juan's mule without a rider, jumped on the back of the animal, and trotted off with all speed. Truly a pleasant situation for an honest Andalusian gentleman, who had come all the way from the Guadalquiver to the Tagus on purpose to fight a duel on account of his sister, to find himself standing alone by a recently slain corpse, with every chance of being implicated in the results of an encounter with which he had nothing to do! Even an Andalusian mind in the seventeenth century was capable of suspicion, that the duel, though an admirable institution in the eyes of every true hidalgo, might not be exactly the right thing in the view of Heaven; and in the miserable predicament in which he found himself, Don Juan fancied that he saw something like a divine warning against the pursuit of his own scheme of vengeance.

He was just resolving to make his best way back to Seville, when a body of alguazils came up to him, and rendered all chance of escape impossible. The man, dead on the ground, was no less a person than Don Pedro de Ramirez, and, though Don Juan protested that he was only there as a peace-maker, adding that he would have been a long way off had not his mule been stolen with the whole of his baggage, the alguazils declared that further investigation was necessary, and the Andalusian was accordingly conducted to the prison of Toledo, together with his valet, who, mounted on an unruly beast, had lagged far behind, and only came up with his master in time to be made his fellow-captive.

Leaving Don Juan in his place of safety, we proceed to narrate the causes of the duel which he had unfortunately witnessed. On the morning of the day when the encounter took place, and after the conclusion of mass, a number of young gentlemen loitered about the nave of the cathedral to gossip, in compliance with a custom which was more honoured in the breach than in the observance, and against which there is, at Seville, an express prohibition. Among others were Don Pedro de Ramirez, always given to chattering, and Don Fernando de Saavedra, both of whom were enamoured of a fair widow resident in the city. The dialogue between these two, which had begun innocently enough, increased in acerbity as it proceeded, and when Don Fernando, in answer to the boasts of Don Pedro, declared that they were mendacious, only one result was possible. The insulted gentleman invited his rival to follow him to the Castel de San Cervantes, a most convenient place for affairs of honour, and the invitation being accepted, they walked on in gloomy mood, crossed the ancient bridge, said to be the work of the Gothic King Wamba, struck into the Seville road, and reached the appointed spot.

That the combat ended with the death of Don Pedro we have already recorded, likewise that the victor, Don Fernando, escaped on Don Juan's mule. What we have not recorded is the fact, that after a while, finding that he was not pursued, Don Fernando, who at first intended to seek refuge in the monastery of Santiago, began to take things easily, and even got rid of the mule, which he left in a certain hostelry. Greatly, however, was he shocked when on his way he saw Don Juan conducted to prison by six alguazils, and followed by a mob, shouting out that he was the murderer of Don Pedro.

Now the best friend whom Don Fernando had in the world was his lovely sister, Leonarda, and to her, when he reached home, did he describe all that had occurred. The death of Don Pedro had not grazed his conscience at all; but the fact that an innocent stranger lay in prison on account of a deed which he himself had perpetrated, weighed heavily on his heart. The straightforward course would have been an open avowal that Don Pedro had died by his hand, but that was an extreme measure, not to be too hastily adopted. It was therefore agreed between brother and sister that, as the prisoner could not be released without some personal risk, they should do all they could to render his imprisonment as comfortable as possible. A round sum of money was to be sent to

him, and, lest this munificence should bring suspicion upon the donors, the presents were to be accompanied by an anonymous note, informing the captive that a lady had seen him pass on his way to prison, and had chosen this substantial manner of showing her compassion.

No arrangement could be more satisfactory. Brother and sister were alike convinced that this plan most happily combined magnanimity with prudence. But no sooner had Leonarda retired to her private room to write the proposed note, than some alguazils waited upon Don Fernando, and respectfully asked him to accompany them to the prison. The death of Don Pedro had, they confessed, something to do with this invitation; but so clear was the innocence of Don Fernando, that they did not so much as ask for his sword. Some sort of rumour had rendered it necessary that he should be confronted with the prisoner, merely as a matter of form, and the ceremony over, he would doubtless be allowed to return home without further molestation. Feeling that his situation was by no means improved, Don Fernando accompanied the alguazils.

Ines, the confidential servant who was charged by Leonarda to carry the letter and the cash to the prisoner, was a shrewd, active damsel, and, as she was aided by the wings of curiosity, it is no wonder that she reached the prison long before Don Fernando's escort, which executed its movements in a very stately and official manner. Veiled in her mantilla she was duly introduced by the captive valet to the captive master, whom she found in very low spirits, but who cheered up amazingly when he had read the letter, the writer whereof assured him that his good looks had won her heart as he passed by her window, and that the aforesaid heart would be in chains as long as he was a prisoner. He had some delicate scruples about taking the money, but these were overcome by the reflection that if he refused it he would go without his dinner; so thanking his stars for his good fortune, he wrote a handsome letter to his unknown benefactress, and gave it to Ines, together with a diamond ring, which she was to present to her mistress, and a few doubloons, which she was to appropriate to her own use, at the same time informing her that he was Don Juan de Aguilar.

Good spirits often give rise to happy thoughts. After the departure of the fair messenger, Don Juan recalled to mind that his family was in some way connected with Don Luis de Ribera, a grandee of great weight, whose father was corregidor of Toledo, and who was, moreover, related to the Duke of Alcala. Don Luis was just the man to help him out of his scrape, so decidedly Don Luis must have a letter. Whilst Don Juan was thus meditating what he ought to write, the door of his cell was opened; Don Fernando and the attendant alguazils stood before him, and he was officially asked if he recognised in the former the murderer of Don Pedro. Now, during the few moments that had elapsed between the fall of the luckless babbler and Don Fernando's escape on the mule, the two gentlemen had taken measure of each other's countenances, and Don Fernando, who perfectly recognised Don Juan, felt, with much uneasiness, that he was recognised in turn. But to the lofty spirit of the Andalusian, it seemed base to purchase freedom by betraying even a criminal, so, after deliberately eyeing Don Fernando from head to foot, he declared, with splendid mendacity, that the gentleman who had killed Don Pedro was much older than the person who stood before him, and, indeed, was not in the least like him. Touched by a generosity which far surpassed his own, Don Fernando was on the point of avowing his guilt, but he was checked by Don Juan, and was thus compelled, almost against his will, to leave the prison, a free and blameless man. While he was walking home, expatiating to himself on the virtues of his new friend, Ines, in rapturous terms, was describing the personal appearance of the same gentleman to her mistress, who thought the letter brought by her attendant was the finest that ever was penned. Catching up Leonarda's notion of captivity, Don Juan had replied that he was her prisoner, inasmuch as no fetters were so strong as the chains of gratitude, adding that it was hard that he who had killed nobody should be arrested, while she, who had slain him, was allowed to go scot-free. Nothing could be prettier or in better taste. Indeed, what with her messenger's glowing description, what with the letter, and last, not least, the diamond ring, Leonarda was deeply enamoured of her yet unseen adorer, and nothing would serve her but to send her portrait to Don Juan by the trusty hands of Ines.

Don Juan was always lucky with his letters. The success of the epistle which he sent to Don Luis surpassed his expectations, for not only did that gallant gentle-

man, whom he had scarcely seen before, come at once to the prison, but so charmed was he with the manners of the captive, that he resolved to share his captivity, ordering a bed to be brought from his home, and paying a hurried visit to his father, the corregidor, in order to inform him that he had two prisoners to release instead of one. While he was absent, Ines dropped in upon Don Juan with Leonarda's portrait, intending just to show it, and then to take it back to her mistress; but so earnest were his entreaties, that when she went away she left it in his hands, on the understanding that it was to be returned on the following day. Of course it was worshipped with the most fervent idolatry by Don Juan, who marvelled that so much beauty could be represented within so small a compass. In the intensity of his delight he showed it to Don Fernando, who had called to pay him a friendly visit, and asked him if he was happy enough to know the orignal. Don Fernando answered dryly in the negative, and took himself off with a displeased air, according little with the debt of gratitude which he owed to Don Juan. The magnanimous prisoner felt not only hurt, but uneasy. Strange things sometimes happened in Spanish cities. Could it be possible that the fair unknown was Don Fernando's wife?

A good night's rest dissipated uneasy thoughts, and on the following morning Don Juan was in cheerful mood. Don Luis had assured him that his release from prison was near at hand, and had also promised to take him about Toledo that very evening, the favour of a short respite having been obtained from the corregidor. While he was indulging in agreeable anticipations, he was informed that two veiled ladies wished to see him, and these, of course, were Leonarda and Ines. Here was an opportnity for courtly oratory not to be lost. Don Juan asked Leonarda why she concealed the sun of her countenance under the cloud of her mantilla, and when the lady, in reply to this brilliant question, uncovered one of her eyes, he took occasion to observe that one sun had set him on fire, and two would surely reduce him to ashes. But he wished to be so reduced, and he implored the obdurate fair one to consume him entirely, that she might have full evidence of her power. Coyness did not prevent Leonarda from answering Don Juan in similar style. Although she now saw him for the first time, she nevertheless, as she candidly avowed, was desperately in love with him. The description of him by Ines had, indeed, given her a very high notion of his personal appearance, but she owned that her imagination was altogether surpassed by the noble reality before her, and that she felt in the humiliating position of a painter who can never make his portraits come up to the originals.

This straightforward and elaborate confession of love, made by a young lady in her teens to a gentleman she had never seen before, scarcely accords with modern views of propriety. But Leonarda was by no means oblivious of decorum. In spite of the solicitations of Don Juan, she refused to unveil her face, and though she allowed him to kiss her hand, she would not take off her glove. Nevertheless, when the prisoner, bearing in mind his expected holiday, asked for her address, and expressed a wish to call on her in the evening, she told him the situation of her house, and added that though she could not admit him, she would speak with him through the grating of the ground-floor wiadow, and even denote the fitting time for his approach by tying a handkerchief to one of the balconies. Thus the lovers parted on the best of terms.

Evening arrived; Don Juan, released for awhile from prison, and accompanied by his valet, was led about the town by Don Luis, who, as a crowning treat, promised to show him the most beautiful lady in the world. What was his surprise to find himself at nightfall conducted to the front of the very house indicated by Leonarda. There it stood distinguished from the rest by its balcònies, and to one of these was attached the promised handkerchief. The signal was intended for him, no doubt, but Don Luis saying that he desired to speak with the wondrous beauty he had previously extolled, requested him to step a little aside, and give warning if any intruder made his appearance. Don Juan's mortification was great, and when Leonarda appeared at the window of the ground-floor, and his friend began to accost her as a lover, his situation became so intolerable, that his valet, who understood his feelings, ran off shouting "murder" at the top of his voice, that he might allure Don Luis from the spot. The stratagem succeeded, and Don Juan, in his turn, was before the ground-floor window. He was gratified enough to hear from Leonarda's lips, that she had thought she was accosting him, while she was speaking to Don Luis, and that she hoped to call

on him next day. At the same time he begged her not to treat Don Luis with undue harshness, since he was too valuable a person to be heedlessly offended. The conversation was brought to a close by the return of Don Luis, who had found nothing to justify the cry of murder, and presently both retired on the appearance of Don Fernando, who entered the house, Don Luis explaining to Don Juan that this was the lady's brother. So with a heavy heart Don Juan went back to his prison, reflecting on the kindness with which he had been treated by Don Luis, and feeling that he was repaying that kindness with abominable ingratitude.

Don Fernando, it will be remembered, was by no means well pleased when he saw his sister's portrait in the hands of Don Juan. Neither was he gratified when, on returning home, he saw Don Luis slinking away with somebody, who looked marvellously like the same Don Juan, as his companion. Some sort of intrigue appeared to be going on, of which he knew nothing, and like a true Spanish brother of the old stamp, who was even more jealous than the old Spanish husband, he determined to know what it all meant, the circumstance that he had found Leonarda sitting up when she ought to have been in bed for hours, increasing his suspicions not a little. Sharply questioned by her irate brother, the lady showed herself perfectly equal to the occasion. The friends of Don Pedro, she argued, vaguely suspected that Don Fernando was concerned in his death, and when the latter wandered about the streets unattended, a ready mark for some vengeful blow, could a devoted sister do less than sit up to await his return, and was it more than natural that she should stand anxiously at the window? Don Fernando thanked Leonarda somewhat dryly for her tender solicitude, and then bluntly avowed that he was uneasy as to the relations between her and Don Juan. With an admirable assumption of naïveté, Leonarda asked him how he could possibly be suspicious of a person whom she had never seen? Don Fernando had never suspected her of seeing Don Juan, but he had found her portrait in his hands, and that, he thought, was very odd. Odd? Not in the least. Had not the brother and sister both agreed that a present ought to be sent to Don Juan? Well, Leonarda had found herself short of cash, and, as the first available article that came to hand, had sent her portrait, which if not worth much in itself, was valuable for its setting. Such was Leonarda's courageous explanation, and, strange to say, it so completely satisfied Don Fernando, that he humbly begged his sister to pardon his unjust suspicions.

Day had now dawned, and no sooner did Leonarda find herself alone than she summoned her faithful Ines, and they both, good creatures, went together to the prison. The lady cautiously observed to the happy prisoner that, as their conversation had been interrupted on that evening, she thought they could not do better than resume it now, and when, grown more confident, Don Juan requested her to remove her veil, she did not indeed comply, but she allowed him to remove it with his own hand, thus occasioning much discourse about radiant suns and dispersed clouds (Don Juan was not very varied in his imagery), which it was gratifying to hear, but which it would be tedious to repeat. The lovers were, however, soon brought down to the region of mere prose by the sound of an approaching footstep, and mistress and maid were both veiled, when Don Luis entered with the joyful news that he had obtained the release of Don Juan. He was somewhat surprised to find two ladies with his friend, but being too discreet a gentleman to make impertinent inquiries, he was content to ask them to present him with some small token as the bearer of good tidings. Aware that if she spoke Don Luis would at once recognise her voice, Leonarda, without opening her lips, presented him with a ring, and retired with her attendant. Don Luis looked at the gift; but he was not pleased. He wondered who the lady could be who treated him with such suspicious coolness, and Don Juan could only say that he did not even know her name, as indeed he did not, this avowal being one of the few truths uttered by any of the personages concerned in this eventful history. The subject was dropped, and the two friends left the prison arm-in-arm, followed by the valet; Don Juan having first, according to custom, dropped a purse into the jailer's hand.

After dining with Don Luis, Don Juan was passing the house of Don Fernando when that courteous gentleman stepped out and represented to him that he was grievously wounding his sense of hospitality. Don Juan, by his handsome conduct in the prison, had imposed upon him a lasting obligation, and the least he could do was to throw open his doors to so signal a benefactor, and implore him to sojourn in his house for ever. With his usual

regard for veracity, he excused himself by declaring that he was not aware that the princely residence before him belonged to Don Fernando, but the excuse was not very happy; for the arms of the Saavedra were blazoned over the door, and of that noble escutcheon no Spanish gentleman could possibly be ignorant. However, they were both in excellent temper, and after a fencing-bout of compliments, Don Fernando took Don Juan into his house, and introducing him to his sister as the man to whom he owed his very life, requested her to honour him with every attention. Leonarda was amazed, but only too happy to comply with her brother's request, and it was arranged that, during his sojourn at Toledo, Don Juan should reside under the roof of the Saavedra.

In the course of the day, Don Juan, standing alone at one of the windows of his new residence, observed Don Luis in the street, looking intently at the house. Their eyes met; Don Juan stepped out and told Don Luis how comfortably he was situated. Thus informed, Don Luis declared that the hospitality of Don Fernando to Don Juan was an unexpected boon to himself. Don Juan could only say that he was very happy to hear this, but had not the slightest notion what Don Luis meant. Nothing could be more simple or less agreeable than the explanation which he received. Gently reminding him that he had just released him from prison, Don Luis told him, at length, that he was deeply enamoured of Leonarda, and that his suit had been but coldly received. Now if Don Juan, taking advantage of his position as a guest of Don Fernando, could only use his noted power of language in pleading the cause of the discarded adviser to the obdurate Leonarda, he would handsomely repay a heavy debt of gratitude.

Don Juan was not more miserable when he stood by the body of Don Pedro on the heights of San Cervantes than he was now, when he heard the discourse of his benefactor. What could he say? If he had been released from prison through the intercessions of Don Luis with the corregidor, how could he refuse to intercede for his friend with Leonarda? When he eagerly declared that the extent of his gratitude would one day be fully proved, Don Luis was rather disappointed; but was soon consoled by Don Juan's promises to aid him in obtaining an interview with Leonarda, whenever he came to the house. As Don Luis could always call on the pretext of visiting Don Juan, such interviews promised to be very frequent.

Don Luis departed in the highest spirits; while Don Juan, charged with the office of giving Leonarda notice of his friend's first visit, felt that he had tumbled from the topmost pinnacle of happiness to an abyss of the blackest despair. His old acquaintances, the sun and the clouds, rose vividly before him, and on this occasion the clouds had the best of it. Then he thought of a ship wrecked in port, of a storm that destroys the crops just before harvest time, and was convinced that these enduring symbols of calamity but faintly pictured his own deplorable condition. After a long and painful struggle between the claims of gratitude and the impulses of love, the former prevailed, and on the opportune appearance of Leonarda he resolved, like an honest Andalusian gentleman, to do his duty. He told her all his story; how he had come from Seville to Toledo to avenge a family affront; how he had witnessed the duel between Don Fernando and Don Pedro; how he had been imprisoned; how he owed his present liberty to the generous exertions of Don Luis; and he wound up by begging her to bestow her affections on the son of the corregidor, and avowing his intention to leave Toledo for ever. In vain did Leonarda implore him to abandon his resolution, in vain did she protest that his conduct savoured more of cruelty to her than of gratitude to Don Luis; his mind was made up, and without further ado he started with his valet for Madrid.

Of all this Don Luis knew nothing. Thinking that the way had been prepared for him, after the manner proposed, he after awhile called at Don Fernando's house, on the pretext of a visit to Don Juan, and found himself in the presence of Leonarda. The lady told him that he was the person, of all others, whom she desired to see; but the hopes inspired by this candid avowal were of short duration, for she proceeded to inform him that she merely wished to set his mind at ease as to the state of her affections, and to let him know that she did not love him in the slightest degree, her heart having been given to Don Juan beyond power of revocation. The noble conduct of Don Juan in sacrificing his happiness she described in glowing colours, showing that she had appreciated it far more than she had cared to avow in the presence of the Andalusian. Don Luis, she admitted, was

worthy of any woman's love, and even if he were not, he would, under any other circumstances, derive unrivalled worth from the advocacy of Don Juan. When, however, Don Juan himself was balanced against him, his case was manifestly hopeless.

Having thus clearly explained her sentiments, Leonarda sailed majestically out of the room, and Don Luis stood dumfoundered. In his case, perhaps, the sudden revulsion of feeling had not been quite so painful as in the case of Don Juan, but still it was bad enough to produce a mental fog, that lasted for some minutes. The mist was dispersed by a sudden resolution. Don Luis resolved to set off at once for Madrid, and to see Don Juan there.

Consequently, when we learn that Don Juan and his valet, resting outside an inn on the high road from Toledo to Madrid, heard the tramp of a horse at full speed, we need have no doubt that the rider was Don Luis. On dismounting from his horse, that gentleman affected a tone of strong indignation, declaring that it was unpardonable ingratitude in Don Juan to leave Toledo, without so much as bidding him farewell. The Andalusian pleading that his flight was sufficiently justified by its nature, Don Luis haughtily replied that it was a presumption on the part of any man in Spain to fancy that he could be more magnanimous than a Ribera. A friend who had not the highest opinion of his friend's generosity, was unworthy that name. Deeply annoyed as he had been, Don Luis insisted that Don Juan should return with him as a prisoner. In the midst of his confusion Don Juan implicitly obeyed the command. Whether he thought that Don Luis derived some sort of official authority from his father, the corregidor, whether he merely succumbed to the weight of his discourse, or whether he slightly suspected that his friend did not precisely mean what he said, history does not record. The probability is that just at that moment he had no clear view on any subject whatever.

All will guess what happened when Don Luis returned to Toledo with his captive, and brought him back to the house which he had so abruptly quitted. Still pursuing his tone of indignation, he declared in the presence of Don Fernando and Leonarda that he looked upon Don Juan as a very ungrateful man, who had behaved badly to his three best friends. Not only had he (Don Luis) been wronged in the manner before mentioned, but Don Juan had offended Don Fernando by an absurd violation of the laws of hospitality, and insulted Leonarda by repaying her love with a hasty flight. The unanimous verdict was that he should be punished with imprisonment for life, in other words, that he should be bound by the chains of wedlock to the peerless Leonarda.

People long talked of the splendid wedding that united the noble houses of Aguilar and Saavedra. And that nothing might be wanting to complete the happiness of Don Juan, it turned out that Don Pedro, who was killed at the beginning of this story, was the very person whose deed caused him to take his eventful trip to Toledo.

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c

BOOK III.

CHAPTER VII. MADGE'S CONFESSION.

The news which had been conveyed to her in her sister's letter had a great effect on Madge Pierrepoint. It placed the relation of Rose and Gerald entirely in a different view before her. When the young man, renewing the boy-and-girl acquaintance which had existed between them at Wexeter, had merely been in the habit of paying her sister pretty compliments, and of meeting her now and then in her walks, Madge, quite confident in Rose's strength of mind and knowledge of what was right and proper, was content to let matters be as they were. She remembered Gerald's impulsive manner and the homage which he was naturally inclined to pay to any pretty girl, and she thought this was merely a flirtation, softened it might be by the recollection of what had passed in those days which seemed now so long away. She had no desire to play the elder sister's part, to warn her of the danger of the course she was pursuing; she knew right well that Rose was perfectly able to take care of herself, and that Gerald was too much of a gentleman to take advantage of any impression which he might make, and she thought that the whole affair would die out as so many hundreds of similar affairs die out daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly, without any permanent harm being done to the persons interested in them.

But when she found that she had been mistaken in her idea, and that the young

man had become so fond of her sister as to make her an offer of marriage, and to renew that offer, and insist upon its fulfilment at a time when his worldly prospects were cloudy, and his fortune anything but assuring, Madge deemed it necessary to throw herself into the breach and to help the young people with all the resources at her command. To say that she did this without a certain amount of struggle and irresolution, without much painful reflection and many tears, would be to say that Madge was not womanly human, and she was very womanly human indeed. As a girl raw and unsophisticated, she had been fascinated by the sham glitter and tawdry sentiment of Philip Vane, but as a woman of the world, young, indeed, but experienced, she had for the first time received that which no woman can ever forget, the undisguised selfless devotion of a fresh young heart which throbs responsive but to one touch, which pulsates but to the dictates of one idol. Gerald Hardinge's was the heart, and she was the idol, in those days now so long ago! And she had abdicated voluntarily, or as it seemed to him voluntarily, and he had taught his heart another allegiance—and it was all for the best!

The circumstances stated in the letter from Rose had placed matters in an entirely new light. It was no longer a question of lovers' meetings and tender episodes in Kensington Gardens; Gerald was determined to push his way through the world, taking Rose with him as his companion and his safeguard; that seemed to be his one hold on life. And Rose, though she did not say so positively, was evidently prepared to share his fate, being only desirous that before their start in life was made, a reconciliation should be effected between Gerald and his father. That was left for her to do, "and you can do this, Madge, and I know you will. You see the importance of the task I have intrusted to you, and you will throw your whole heart into it." Madge decided that Rose should not be deceived. She would throw her whole heart into it, and she would succeed. She re-read the letter throughout, smiling somewhat sadly at the reference to the manner in which Gerald employed his leisure while at Wexeter, but laying down the paper with a full determination to do all that was asked of her.

And this determination was not arrived at without a full appreciation of the difficulties to be surmounted, the self-sacrifices to be made. Madge knew she could not broach the subject to Sir Geoffry without representing herself in what was, at least, an unenviable light; without acknowledging her previous intimacy with Gerald Hardinge; without confessing that at the very time the young man was the topic of conversation between them, she had listened to all his father had to say, she had taken her part in the discussion as though its subject had been entirely unknown to her, and had given her suggestions from what one might imagine by her confession to be anything but a disinterested point of view. The whole story of the old life must be raked up again and submitted to the examination of a hard and austere man, who would have but little compunction or compassion for such human frailties as were concerned in it, and whose anger at finding that he had been misled, however unintentionally, would probably induce him to pursue the course exactly opposite to that which was desired. However, the experiment must and should be made.

Madge was unable to carry her proposed scheme into execution as speedily as she could have wished. The mental excitement involved in his dealings with Messrs. Delabole and Vane, and the subsequent examination of their documents and schemes, seemed to have been a little too much for him. He complained of dizziness and lassitude; his favourite occupation of worrying and dogging the gardener seemed somewht to have lost its usual charm; he became silent and preoccupied, and for a long time he seemed to shun even the society of Mrs. Pickering, omitting to pay his usual morning visit to the housekeeper's room, and to send for her to read to him in the evening. Madge for her part fell in with the drift of the general's humour, knowing that no slight was intended to herself, and thinking it better that he should be left to recover at his own time and after his own fashion. When this new state of things, however, had lasted for more than a week, without any sign of change, Madge thought it advisable to send for some physician; but on the proposition being made to Sir Geoffry, he negatived it promptly and decisively. "He was quite well, he had never been better in his life; nothing ailed him beyond a slight chill, easily got in this wretched climate at the fall of the leaf. He must beg that Mrs. Pickering would not think of summoning the services of any doctor,

who would not understand his constitution, and merely tend to make matters worse."

But though the old general could and would do without calling in a physician, he very soon found that the pleasant company of his housekeeper had become an absolute necessity to him. After about ten days' solitude, in which he nearly moped himself to death, Sir Geoffry, according to his old custom, knocked at the housekeeper's door, and on being bidden to come in, entered as usual with his formal greeting. He remained but a very little time in the room, being slightly ill at ease, and obviously afraid that Madge might make some reference to his prolonged absence; but before leaving he expressed his wish that Mrs. Pickering should favour him with her company in the evening, and that their pleasant readings might be resumed.

Accordingly, when the general had finished his dinner, Madge repaired to the library, and found Sir Geoffry ready to receive her, the newspapers, cut and folded, were in their usual place, and the book which they had last been reading lay ready to her hand. Madge took her seat and began to read aloud, but after some little time, glancing over at the general, she noticed that his attention was fixed upon the fire, and to her astonishment she noticed the traces of something like tears upon his cheek.

Madge stopped reading, and, recalled to himself by the abrupt cessation, Sir Geoffry made a hasty endeavour to recover his composure.

"Is there anything the matter," he said, "that you stopped reading so suddenly, Mrs. Pickering?"

"No," she replied. "I did not quite know whether it was agreeable to you."

"Most certainly," he replied. "I should not have asked you to read to me unless—— Ah!" he said, with an effort, "it is useless to continue this. I was inattentive to the reading; I was thinking of something very different. Tell me, Mrs. Pickering, for I know I can trust you to speak frankly to me, do I seem much changed during the last few days?"

"Frankly, then, yes, Sir Geoffry. You have been more than usually quiet, and much less than usually interested about the affairs of the house, and what has been going on around you. You have been very much preoccupied, and still are, I venture to think, a little out of health."

"I don't know that I am actually ailing at the present moment," said the general, quietly, "but I have had a sort of presentiment that I shall not live very long."

"Sir Geoffry!" interrupted Madge, with a start.

"Oh, the mere fact of death would not alarm me. One who for so many years has carried his life in his hand is accustomed to look with tolerable calmness on death's approach; but there are one or two matters which I should like to have settled before I die, and when my attention strayed from your reading, I was thinking that I could not do better than discuss them with you."

A gleam of hope flashed through Madge's brain. Was it not possible that Sir Geoffry, of his own free will, might relieve her of the irksomeness of the task she had undertaken?

"You will recollect, Mrs. Pickering," said the general, after a pause, "a conversation which took place between us some short time ago about some—some family matters of mine; you will recollect my telling you of my son, of the reasons which had induced me to exile him from home, and to refuse to receive him when the other day he attempted to effect a reconciliation?"

"I remember it all, perfectly."

"You did not approve of my behaviour in that matter from first to last?"

"I did not agree with it," said Madge. "If I am to speak frankly to you, I will say that your first decision, when it was a question of Mrs. Heriot's conduct, was arrived at when you were much younger and more impulsive than you are now, and was the foundation of a series of errors which you have since carried out. From what I learn from you, your son has acted in a noble and a manly manner throughout, and instead of being ashamed, you ought to be proud of him!"

"I have thought so more than once within the last few days, Mrs. Pickering," said Sir Geoffry, quietly. "I do not mind making that confession."

There was a pause for a few moments, after which Madge said:

"I, too, have a confession to make in this matter."

"You, Mrs. Pickering?"

"I have a confession to make to you, and your pardon to ask, for a certain amount of deception which I have practised towards you."

"Deception!"

"Nothing more nor less. Do you know

what position I held in life before I came into your employ?"

"Captain Cleethorpe told me, but I have almost forgotten. In the telegraph-office, were you not?"

"Ay, but before that?"

"I confess I have not an idea."

"I was an actress in the Wexeter Theatre. In that same theatre where your son was a scene-painter."

"Good God! had he sunk so low as that? Had he dragged my name so deeply through the mire?"

"You need not fear for your name," said Madge, with a touch of sarcasm in her voice; "he had abjured it, as he told you he should, and was known as Mr. Gerald Hardinge. And as for his position there, neither he nor those about him saw anything to be ashamed of in it. He earned his living honestly, and by the industry and exercise of his talent."

"Granted," said Sir Geoffry, biting his lips. "And now tell me further. Was he much in your society?"

"We were thrown constantly together."

"And with the result that might be expected, I suppose? He fell in love with you?"

"He asked me to become his wife, but that was impossible, as at the time I was already married."

"You already married, and he did not know it?"

"It is not unusual in the theatrical profession for ladies, although they may be married, to retain their maiden name. Such was my case; moreover, as my husband was not an actor, nor in any way connected with the company, Mr. Heriot would have no chance of knowing that I was anything but what I professed to be."

"I beg your pardon," said Sir Geoffry, stiffly, "I am not acquainted with the etiquette observed amongst theatrical people."

"Exactly," said Madge, "and that is why I explain it to you."

"So Mr. Heriot made you an offer of marriage, which you refused?"

"No," said Madge, "I did not refuse. There are circumstances in the story which it is unnecessary that I should explain, but which made me think it better to leave the place abruptly, and to give Mr. Heriot no chance of seeing me again."

"And you did so?"

"I did so, and from that hour to this I have never set eyes upon him."

"I do not ask you for your reasons, Mrs. Pickering," said Geoffry, taking Madge's hand and bending over it; "I am certain they were right and proper ones. To think that you have known George, and that he should have asked you to marry him. Poor George! poor George!"

The tone in which he pronounced these last words was so soft and sad as to inspire Madge with fresh hope.

"There are stranger things to come yet, Sir Geoffry," she said. "George is in love with some one else now."

"How do you know that? You said you had not seen him since," said the general, quietly.

"From the best of all possible authorities—the lady herself," said Madge.

"He has not fallen in love with any more actresses, I hope," said the general. "I could overlook anything in you, Mrs. Pickering: but I confess it is not from behind the scenes of a theatre that I should wish my daughter-in-law to be selected."

"You run no risk of that, Sir Geoffry. The young lady in question is my own sister."

"What, the young lady whom I have heard Cleethorpe and Mr. Drage speak about, who lived for some time with you, and was so pretty and so clever?"

"The same. Gerald—I cannot call him anything else—took great notice of her when she was a child; gave her drawing-lessons, and was very kind to her."

"That was for her sister's sake," said the general, shortly.

"Undoubtedly; but it seems he has renewed the acquaintance in London, and cares for her entirely for herself. He has outgrown that foolish fancy of his boyhood, and settled down into a sober, serious regard."

"And does—George—propose to marry your sister?"

"He does. In a letter which I have just had from her, she explains that his earnest wish is that they should be at once married, and emigrate to some distant country, where they can commence a new life."

"And does he mean to leave England?"

"So I learn from Rose. Since Gerald's last interview with you, he is, she says, quite a changed man. He seems to find it impossible to get over the wrong which has been done him; the treatment which he then received. Above all things, he feels the injustice he received at your hands in your suspicion that his story of having

discovered his mother's innocence was merely a fabrication, intended to do him good in your eyes. You bade me speak frankly, Sir Geoffry," added Madge, looking at the old general, who had fallen back into his previous attitude, and, with his head sunk on his breast and his hands spread out on his knees before him, was glancing vacantly into the fire; "you bade me speak frankly, and I have done so; I fear to your distress and annoyance."

"I have brought the distress and annoyance on myself, and must make the best of it. Pray God it has not gone too far! This self-exile that he contemplates, can it be averted?"

"If he knew himself forgiven by you, if he only knew you acknowledged that you had misconstrued his intention in his last attempt to see you, I will answer for your being able to do what you wish with him."

"What I wish," said the general, in a low voice, "is to see him once again before I die."

"You must not speak in that manner, Sir Geoffry," said Madge, rising in her seat and bending over his chair. "I must ask permission to insist on acting as I proposed some days since, on calling in a physician."

"He could do me no good," said the old man. "I have no illness, no pain, nothing save a strong conviction that my death is close at hand. And that thought would trouble me but little if I could see George again."

"You shall see him again, and, please Heaven, live many happy years with him, in which all this troublous time shall be forgotten. But I tell you candidly I will not move in the matter, and you know you cannot move without me," she added, with a smile, "unless you let me send for proper medical advice."

"Let it be as you wish, my dear," said the general, "only recollect what is now the one desire of my life." And he sank back in his chair and sighed wearily.

Madge had no idea that within a few days he could have become so feeble and so prostrate.

Availing herself of the permission implied in Sir Geoffry's last words, Madge sent to Doctor Chenoweth, one of the most celebrated physicians at Springside, and asked him to come up to Wheatcroft and see the general. Her selection was made, partly because Doctor Chenoweth was a member of Sir Geoffry's club, and was already on terms of club familiarity with his intended patient; partly because the doctor had the reputation of being so much a man of the world as to believe in nature, rather more than in the pharmacopœia, and inclined to ascribe to diseases a special cause and a special treatment, rather than to generalise verbosely and dogmatically, as was the case with most of his brethren.

Doctor Chenoweth, coming out to Wheatcroft in his trap, found the general seated in the library, moody and preoccupied, as he had been for many days before. Madge at first had an idea that it would be better if the doctor seemed to have dropped in accidentally; but on a little reflection she abandoned this notion, and receiving Doctor Chenoweth in the hall, rapidly explained the state the patient was in before he saw him. With Sir Geoffry the doctor was closeted some considerable time. Madge, sitting in her own room, with the door open, intent upon seeing him before he went, heard his words of farewell: "And you will recollect, Sir Geoffry, that, above all, I enjoin upon you the strictest quiet and freedom from all mental disturbance. I will not hear for an instant of your giving your attention to business matters, even of your mixing yourself up with your domestic affairs. You have a prime minister fully competent to deal with them, and in her hands you must leave them. Understand, I have assumed dictator's powers, and I require them to be obeyed. To a military man I know I need amplify no more."

He closed the door behind him as he spoke, and the next instant was in the passage, where he was confronted by Madge.

"In your room, my dear Mrs. Pickering," said he, answering her eager look; "let us go into your room, if you please. In matters of this sort I have learned to distrust giving any opinion, or even making a remark, in open passages. Now," he continued, when they had regained her room, and he had motioned her to be seated, "I am ready to speak freely. Sir Geoffry is in anything but a healthy condition; he has had, if I mistake not, some serious mental worry, which has had its due effect upon him. Am I correct in this supposition?"

"You are. Sir Geoffry has recently had a great deal of anxiety, but he is anxious that it should not be referred to."

"Like all other people in the same plight. And yet, of course, he keeps on perpetually preying upon it and hugging it to himself. Now this is all very well with hypochon-

driacs, a class of people with which, my dear Mrs. Pickering, we are not entirely unfamiliar at Springside; but when there is any real disease it is a thing most specially to be guarded against, and I look to you to——"

"Do you mean to say that Sir Geoffry is seriously ill?" asked Madge, anxiously.

"I speak to you as a practical woman. I know that you are one by your look, your earnestness, your very manner of moving about. As such you are entitled to frankness, while the fribbles and dolls of society should receive merely evasion. Sir Geoffry Heriot's heart is seriously affected, and any sudden emotion might be fatal to him."

Madge turning deadly white, leaned her head upon the table to steady herself, then said, "You speak strongly, Doctor Chenoweth."

"I speak to you the literal, undisguised truth. I could wrap it up in any form of conversational sweetmeat that might please you. I should do so, if I were addressing most of my clientèle, but you are worthy of plainer speaking, and from me you get it."

"Do you consider Sir Geoffry's life in danger?"

"If any serious news were to be brought suddenly under his notice, most undoubtedly. And I speak thus strongly because, from what you have just said, he is evidently labouring under an excess of mental excitement."

"Doctor, in the course of your career you must have been the recipient of many confidences as strange and stranger than that which I am about to make. Sir Geoffry is eager for a reconciliation with his son, from whom by force of circumstances he has been separated for many years. Is it likely that the meeting between the two would be fraught with danger to the general?"

"Under present circumstances with the greatest danger! I would not answer for his life if he were called upon to undergo so great an excitement."

"Thank you, doctor," said Madge, after a moment's pause. "It was important that your advice should be asked. You may be certain that it shall be acted upon."

"So," she said to herself, twenty minutes after, when the doctor's swift roans had borne him into Springside, and he was whispering the lightest of nothings into the deafest of ears in the Hot Wells Hotel, "so ends my plan of immediate reconciliation between father and son. It is plain, from Doctor Chenoweth's opinion, that Sir Geoffry's strength is not sufficient for him to bear the meeting, and that it must consequently be deferred."

When, in the course of the afternoon, she commenced talking on the subject with Sir Geoffry, and, approaching it in the most cautious manner, was about to suggest the impossibility of summoning Gerald at once to his father's side, she was surprised to find how completely the general coincided with her view."

"Quite right," he said, "quite right. There is nothing that I am so anxious for as to see my boy, and to take him to my arms. But we must wait a little; I am not strong enough to go through much excitement, and I've just had some news which necessitates my placing a rod in pickle for those scoundrels who were here the other day."

"Scoundrels! what scoundrels?"

"From the Terra del Fuegos mine, my dear. I shall yet be the means of bringing them into the prisoner's dock."

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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XII. THE PEDLAR AT TOBEREEVIL.

In the mean time the pedlar was trudging through the woods towards the mansion of Tobereevil. He arrived at the back door, as a pedlar should arrive, and was confronted by Tibbie, who looked more hideous than usual in the full blaze of the evening sun.

"Go 'way out o' this!" was Tibbie's greeting. "We don't want no visitors here."

"Sorra visitor am I," said the pedlar, gaily; "so yer conscience may be at aise, ma'am."

"Nor stragglers nayther," said Tibbie, doggedly.

"Nor stragglers nayther," said the pedlar, "only havin' brought ye a few han'some articles of dhress, ma'am."

Tibbie fell back, and gazed hungrily on the pedlar's bundle. She was well aware that she stood in need of some covering. She was clothed in rags, and the rags were beginning to threaten that they would no longer hold together. Something she must get, were it only a piece of sacking, against the winter. And pedlars had left off coming to Tobereevil. Did she let this one go he might never return.

"Come in, thin, will ye!" she said, gruffly, "an' show what ye have got. But I warn ye not to be axin' yer high prices, for we know the worth o' money about here, so we do."

The pedlar followed her down dark unwholesome passages into the kitchen. It was a vast underground chamber, paved with black, reeking flags, its ceiling studded with hooks, from which no comfortable flitch was seen to swing. There were two great recesses in the wall, arched and chimneyed, holding enormous grates, which were eaten up with rust. Ovens and hot-plates stood idly about, broken, dilapidated, stuffed with rags and dirt. In one of the recesses a fire was burning on the flags, small and dwindling, fed by a few sticks of wood, and some stray scraps of turf. Before this fire a woodcock was roasting, dangling from a string. A rough wooden stool drawn up before the fire, and a one-pronged fork upon the flags, showed that Tibbie had been interrupted in her superintendence of the cookery.

"Be smart, my man, an' show us what ye've got; an' ye needn't be makin' eyes at the bird. It's for Simon's dinner; he shot it hissel'. An' Tibbie's got to dine off the bones."

"'Deed, thin, ma'am, ye're but a delicate ater to be livin' in sich a hungry part," said the pedlar, as he unrolled his pack. "But here's somethin'll give ye a relish for the feast. Here's a chintz'll make ye so beautiful your own friends won't know ye! Rale rich stuff! Flowers as big as taycups! An' all for no more nor fourpence a yard!"

Tibbie knotted her knuckles together to keep down her amazement, while she glutted her eyes upon the beauties of this bargain. It was many a day since she had dreamed of such a gown as that. At sight of it long dead memories of past fairs and dances, and youthful frolics, and blithe companions, got up and jostled each other through the old creature's brain.

"Ye'll make it twopence!" said the wily Tibbie.

"Sorra penny now undher fippence,"

said the pedlar, beginning with dignity to roll up the stuff. "When a lady doesn't know a bargain when she sees it, why it's part of my profession to tache her at a little inconvanience."

"Fourpence, ye said!"

"Fippence," said the pedlar.

"Oh, musha, musha, but ye're miserly an' hard! An' 'twas fourpence ye tould me at the first."

"If ye say another word I'll make it sixpence," said the pedlar.

Tibbie groaned and rocked herself, with her eyes upon the chintz. The material before her was worth eighteenpence a yard. Tibbie knew it well. It was strong and soft, and warm and silky; printed in good colours, and of the most brilliant design. Why the ordinary pedlar would not give her a calico at the price! But to part with so many fivepences cut Tibbie to the heart. And the thought of walking about Tobercevil, amidst the cobwebs and mildew, dressed out in all this finery, was like to make her crazy between horror and delight. And in the mean time, while she deliberated, the coveted stuff retreated, yard after yard, into the pedlar's pack.

"I'll be biddin' a good evenin' to ye," said the pedlar, shouldering his bundle.

"Stop! stop!" shrieked Tibbie, and she huddled herself away across the kitchen. She seized the poker, so that the pedlar thought at first that she was going to lay it about his head. But she only poked it up the chimney, bringing down a shower of soot, and a grimy little bag which chinked as it fell among the ashes.

"Wan, two, three, four!" said Tibbie, counting out her money. "Oh, my curse on you for a villain, would ye take it from me?"

The pedlar put the money in his pocket, Tibbie glaring at him strangely the while, as if she had given him poison, and he had swallowed it. The pedlar cut off the cloth, folded it neatly, and placed it in a roll in Tibbie's arms, where she gripped it and pinched it, so that had it been a living thing it certainly would have been strangled.

"Now, thin!" said the pedlar, "would you be lettin' the masther know that I am here?"

"The masther?"

"Misther Finiston hissel'."

"Ah, thin, young man, ye come a long piece out o' yer way to get yer head broke."

"Anan?" said the pedlar.

"Wid the poker, or the hind leg o' a chair," went on Tibbie. "There's no luck in axin' for a sight o' Simon's money."

"But I want to show him mine," said the pedlar.

"Is it laughin' at him ye are?"

"Sorra laugh in the matther. If so be he has anythin' to sell, old coats, or gownds, or curtains, or jewellery, why it's mysel' will give the best price for the goods."

"Sit down, thin, good man, an' wait a bit, for that's a quare different tune ye're whistlin' now. He's out gleanin', but he'll be in for his dinner by'n bye."

"Gleanin'?" asked the pedlar.

"Pickin' what he can get," returned Tibbie. "Sticks for the fire, an' wisps o' hay; wool out o' the hedges', an' odd praties an' turnips out o' the rigs."

The pedlar stared. "It amuses the ould sowl, I suppose," he said.

"Oh, ay!" said Tibbie, with a whine, "an' helps to keep the roof over his head, the crature!"

There was silence upon this, during which the black-beetles came a journey across the kitchen flags, and walked playfully over the pedlar's boots; while Tibbie went on with her cooking, making the woodcock spin giddily from its string as she basted it before the fire. She was considering whether the pedlar would buy the rags and bones which she had been storing in the cellar for the past ten years.

By-and-bye a sound was heard from above, and Tibbie left off torturing the woodcock, and placed him on a dish. A slice of bread and a glass of water were added on a tray, and then the miser's dinner was carried up-stairs.

"Ye may wait, my man," said Tibbie, coming back. And when the tray had come down again, she ushered the pedlar into the presence of her master.

He was sitting, all alive with expectation, in the dreary state of his dilapidated dining-room, a little leaner, more wrinkled, more surly and fretful-looking than on the day when he had scared Miss Martha out of his presence. In a corner of the room lay a small heap of the spoils which he had gleaned off the country since the morning.

"Take them away, Tibbie, take them away," he said, waving his hand towards the meagre pile, "and be careful about picking up the straws. They have cost me a hard day's work, good woman; and see that you do not lose the fruits of your master's toil. You perceive, young man, we will have no waste here, and I am glad

to learn that you are one of those who count nothing too old or decayed to be of use. I am told that you are anxious to do a little business with me, and that being so, we will proceed up-stairs."

The miser's nose was long, thin, and almost transparent, and as he spoke he sat sharpening the end of it—as it seemed to the looker-on—with a many-coloured rag, which had once been a pocket-handkerchief.

The pedlar stood, hat in hand, a little in the shadow thrown by the strong red sunset and the heavy oaken framework of the window. His attitude was respectful, but there was a strange look of loathing mixed with fear in his eyes, which now fixed themselves, as if fascinated, on the face of the miser, and now roved about the room.

"You will see a great house," said the miser, while he shuffled across the hall, looking nervously over his shoulder, as the keys jingled in his hand, "a dilapidated house, which the owner has no means of repairing. What it costs me, young man, to keep the holes in the windows stopped, so as to shut out the wind, and prevent the roof flying off on a stormy night—why, it makes me what I am," he said, flapping his patched garment ostentatiously. "It makes me what I am."

The first Finiston of Tobereevil, the man who had brought the blight upon his race, had had in his princely days a grand idea about the planning of a dwelling. The staircase was wide enough for eight men to ascend its black steps abreast. Inky faces of demons and satyrs grinned from among vine-leaves in the carvings of the balustrades. Black marble nymphs twined their arms and their hair round pillars on the landing, and lost themselves amid foliage and shadows. Formerly, all the sinister effect of this blackness had been carried off by the ruddy velvet hangings which had glowed between the arches, and the deeply-stained windows which had loaded every ray of sunlight with a special flush of colour. Flora and Bacchus had crowned themselves in the splendours of the illuminated glass, making the inner air warm with the reflection of their frolics. Their wreathed attendants had chased each other laughingly under the lower arches of the side-lights. Now Flora's azure robe still fluttered against the sun, and her feet still twinkled among clouds and roses. But her fair round throat had become a spike of ragged glass, and the sky looked in rudely where her face had used to smile. Bacchus had had his lower limbs completely shivered away, and seemed to scar out of an intrusive bush of ivy. As the miser crept feebly up the staircase the scarlet midsummer sunset had assaulted all the colours in the window, flinging fire to right and left, and streaming triumphantly through the rents in the glass. The black nymphs were all burning as they clung round their pillars, each like an Indian widow upon her pyre.

From left and right of this landing another staircase led, one to each wing of the house. Simon turned to the left, and brought the pedlar along galleries and down passages, and up more stairs, till he reached a low-roofed lobby, where tall black presses were stationed like goblins in the mouldy twilight. To the locks of these he fitted one after another of his rusty keys, seeking for valuables which the pedlar was to buy of him. And meantime the pedlar had leisure to observe how the roof was broken in above the spot where they stood, and how the walls and the ceiling, and the presses and the floor, were all stained with rain-marks, as if the rain had poured in there many winters through.

"You perceive that we have got an enemy here," said the miser, with a dreary laugh. "But it will be a long time yet before he makes his way down to the lower rooms. We have damp down-stairs, plenty of damp, but never a pouring stream like this. It will suit me well to get rid of this property before next winter comes round."

The property was dragged out, and proved to be some faded garments, stained with rain, and eaten up with mildew. They were shrunk and discoloured; past all recognition of shape or hue. The mice had dined off them at many a hungry pinch, and the moths had made pasture of them for years. That one fine lady of Tobereevil, while sweeping her satin skirts down the sumptuous staircase below, and counting herself the first of a race of queens, had little thought that her faded finery would be thus preserved in the family, and bargained over by her descendants, after she and her expectations had long melted into the churchyard mould. Yet there it lay, exposed in its ghastly uncleanness; and this pedlar was to purchase it, and take it forth into the world.

The pedlar stood in a recess between two of the presses, and close to his head there was a tiny window. Through this loophole he could see far over the country.

He could see a large portion of the estate of Tobereevil, a few hovels, a few sickly wreaths of smoke, vast rich tracts of uncultivated land, melancholy fallows, and the strong, brilliant woods. The whole was a picture of neglected land, rich in beauty and glowing with promise, but with the shadow of the curse distinct upon its face amidst all the splendours of the midsummer sunset. The pedlar gazed long, as if he had forgotten his bargain, and that lively sanciness which was his business expression did not find its way through the bitterness on his face.

"You will understand that I expect a good price for these articles," said the miser's voice, recalling him to business. "They are rich and fine, and of most costly materials. They will bear cleaning, dyeing, remodelling, patching—ah! there is no end to the benefits which their owner will find in them."

The pedlar turned round, and saw the figure of the old man bending and moving as he shook out, straightened, folded, and flaunted his gaudy and unseemly rags, and turning from the dreary landscape, and meeting this more dismal and ludicrous picture, a look of horror and disgust burned gradually in the pedlar's gaze.

"Name your price, and don't keep me in suspense," said the miser, irritably, and suddenly raised his greedy eyes, and peered into the pedlar's face. Then, as if he could hear no more, and with a glance of terror, the pedlar raised both his arms hurriedly, and pushed the miser from him, swiftly and strongly, but with nothing violent in his touch; turned from him without a word, and fled along the lobby, past the goblin presses, and down the staircase, and to left and to right, mistaking his way, and finding it again, escaping at last out of the door, and away into the woods of Tobereevil.

"Stop thief! stop thief!" shrieked Simon, pattering after him a little way, then coming back to see that nothing had been taken, then following again with his cry, unconvinced, "Stop thie—ief!" And Tibbie at last caught the sound in her dungeon underground, and came running and stumbling up-stairs. But when the two old creatures met, panting and vociferating in the hall, they were obliged to declare to each other that the pedlar had vanished, and that he was the devil, a gipsy, or a thief at the least.

Yet after this they found his pack lying untouched in the dining-room, together with the money which Tibbie had paid him for her dress. And in wrangling over the contents of the bundle they had ample occupation for the rest of the evening.

CHAPTER XIII. TROUBLED IN HER MIND.

It was a moment of some excitement to May when she climbed into the great travelling-carriage of the Archbolds, and was taken from the gate of Monasterlea. Miss Martha inspected her departure with pride.

"I have done my best to turn her out like a gentlewoman," thought that kindly spinster, "and, let them have whom they may, they can never see a sweeter face at their board. Ah, deary me! why does Paul not come home while she is looking like that?"

And Miss Martha returned to her lonely parlour to follow out the train of this idea, with her knitting in her lap, her spectacles on her nose, and her mouth at a reflective angle. She had been busy as a bee for the past few days, but now the delicate laces were all cleared and pressed, the fair muslin gowns were all folded, the little knots and rosettes of gay ribbons were all stitched in their places, the excitement of trunk-packing had come to an end, and the humdrum knitting had returned to its place between Miss Martha's fingers. Her child was gone, but though Monasterlea might be sleepier and lonelier than ever, Miss Martha was neither sleepy nor lonely. She was accustomed to live out a great deal of life within her twenty-four hours, and she could live it out as well in her silent parlour, over a silent occupation, as though she had been haranguing a multitude, or ploughing the rustiest fallow on Mr. Finiston's estate. It was a gift that she had got in the order of charity, this unflagging vitality, which would not be unoccupied. It had lit a comfortable hearth in this ruin surrounding her, it managed her farm, made a pride of her meadow-grass, drew beauty and fatness from her garden and dairy, and made a pleasant proverb of her house-keeping. When constrained to be quiet she could employ her energy in planning good things for other people. There were many within her reach who were worthy of a thought, and very many more who were in need of it. And when all those were reckoned there was not found one who was not infinitely the better when the fruit of such remembrance was dropped, ripe and unexpected, into his lap. Was there thirst, or hunger, or nakedness, or repining hiding itself in anguish in the holes of the land?

The trouble was a lion, and Miss Martha was but a mouse, but a mouse who never left off gnawing at the nets and the chains.

On the present occasion Miss Martha was thinking about Paul. She could not tell why, but she had thought a great deal about the young man lately. For the past few days he had scarcely for a moment been absent from her mind. She had dreamed about him every night, and she had talked about little else every day. This was the more remarkable, as a new event ought to have sent all her ideas in the direction of Camlough. Miss Martha was fully aware of the important step that was taken when an attractive young girl like May was sent to establish a friendly footing in a house like that of the Archbolds, where she should be admired, and coveted, and taught the ways of the world. Miss Martha's pride on this point knew no bounds. A stray duke might find his way to Camlough, and might want to place his coronet on May's simple brow. Well, and was it for her own desolation upon the consummation of such an event that Miss Martha could fret over her knitting? Was it for her own sake that she cherished so fierce an enmity towards that imaginary duke? No; there was nothing about that. It was Paul who would be defrauded, Paul who would be wronged. Miss Martha, I have hinted, was a faithful soul, and she had accepted Paul Finiston as the son of her heart. Whilst his mother had lived he had been nothing to her, but his mother was dead, and he was second with her now; and Miss Martha's second was far better than very many people's first. It was an object of her life to bring him home from his wandering to pet him, to worship him, to watch over his interests, and constrain fortune, if it might be, to relinquish her old grudge against his family, and to shower favours for the future upon this innocent head. And in order that her heart might not be divided, she would make her first and her second into one precious whole, so that one could not hurt the other, whilst she herself must be just to both. Thus best would she pay her debt to the dead Elizabeth. Yet here, and amid these day-dreams, was May, with all her sweetness, whirled away into the chances of the world, and Paul beyond seas, and that imaginary duke coming post-haste to Camlough. So Miss Martha might have guessed very well how for the past few days she had been thinking so incessantly of Paul. Now, when she was alone, she drew his last letter from the pocket of her apron, and spread it upon her knees, and read it many times. There was not one word in the whole about coming home.

In the mean time May had passed over the rim of the Golden Mountain, and forgotten her own identity in marvelling at the beauty of the world. This midsummer eve seemed like to be the first of a new era in her life. The oxen planted their feet on the steep pavement, the carriage slid slowly from brae to brae, and from hillock to hillock, moors, fens, and lakes shimmered and burned in the sun, and shifted with a magical intermingling of lines and hues, floating off in flecks of blue and silver, and amethyst and amber, to become mere pencillings of tinted glory in the distance. In the midst of all this flush of nature on went May like a queen of summer upon a royal progress, with golden weeds brushing her cheeks, and crimson berries dropping ripe into her hands. Till the castle appeared in sight, and then a little accident occurred.

A shrill wailing sound had been for some minutes coming from a distance towards the carriage.

Accustomed to the strange cries of birds and shepherds, May did not mind it; neither did the coachman nor the drivers of the oxen. At last it arose out of a bush above their heads.

"Aye—aye—aye—aye—aye!"

This was a human voice, and, moreover, there was a white pocket-handkerchief waving madly from the point of a very long umbrella. Yet no human being was to be seen.

"It's a banshee!" murmured one of the men who led the oxen. "Go on, ye baste!" he said, whacking the animals in trepidation.

"Ye idiot! don't ye see it's a lady in disthress!" thundered down one of the coachmen from his perch upon the box.

A figure had appeared upon the bank above, looming largely against the sky. It was dressed in a long dark gown, a scarlet shawl, and a white kerchief over the head and under the chin. The face was long and fat, and suffering from recent sunburn. The arms were waved with tragic appeal towards the travellers.

"It's Mrs. Lee, a lady from the castle, miss," said the coachman, touching his hat to May. "It's likely she wants a sate in the carriage. Lost herself, I suppose, she has. Ye've no objections, miss? Yes, ma'am, comin', ma'am. Lane on me,

ma'am! Oh, begorra, you'll have to come an' help us, Darby! Press yer weight betune the two of uz, ma'am! it'll balance betther. Now, sl—ither down, ma'am, and ye'll come safe to the botthom!" And the tall, stout lady was fairly dragged down the sandstone cliff, and deposited panting on the road.

She looked helpless, travel-soiled, and weary. Tears and dust were mingled in her eyes.

"My dear ma'am," she said piteously to May, "I beg your pardon, but I am obliged to intrude."

"Not at all," said May. "I shall be glad of a companion."

"Thank you, thank you, thank you!" gasped Mrs. Lee all round, as the men once more put their hands under her elbows and hoisted her respectfully into the carriage.

"A-a-ah!" she groaned, sinking back into the seat, and sitting upon May, and unfurling a large umbrella against the sun. "My dear ma'am, I am exceedingly obliged to you. We cannot be introduced till we get to the castle. You are particular in these countries, and that is quite proper. But in the mean time might we not have a little conversation?"

"I should be very glad of it," said May.

"A-ah!" groaned Mrs. Lee again. "If you had been lost on the hills ever since breakfast time this morning you would not be a very entertaining companion. You would be hungry and tired, and in bad humour, like me."

Mrs. Lee's long, smooth face was chiefly expressive of softness and feebleness. She had great brown eyes, full of meek and irritating patience. She had a complaining voice, and her words fell out of her mouth as if the wires that managed her speaking were out of order. She had come from America, but it was not very clear to what country she belonged. She had not the smartness of an American, nor the elegance of an Englishwoman, nor yet the liveliness and humour of an Irishwoman. She was not exactly coarse or vulgar, but she was heavy and unrefined. Her accent was of no nation, and her manners were peculiarly her own. She had been heard to address Sir John as "My dear ma'am." It seemed odd that this lady should be a guest at Camlough, but she was Christopher's mother, and this was Katherine's doing.

May was naturally wondering what could have brought this good lady so high up on the hills, alone and without her bonnet. Her figure did not seem suited to climbing or jumping, yet to enjoy solitude on the braes of Camlough climbing and jumping were indispensable accomplishments.

"You will be quite surprised at finding me here," said Mrs. Lee, answering her thought. "But, my dear ma'am, a troubled mind will not let a person rest. It walks one about. It gets one into scrapes. What I would give for leave to sit and rest myself a whole long day, my dear ma'am—I could not describe it to you!"

May murmured something to the effect that she was sorry to learn that Mrs. Lee was troubled in her mind.

"My dear ma'am," said Mrs. Lee, "troubled is no word for it. Tortured is a more natural expression."

This was said with such earnestness, and with such a face of distress, that May became sympathising, and looked so.

"A-ah! Tortured is the word. And there has been no one to confide in here. The truth is, I am afraid of her ladyship. And besides, how could I speak to her on such a subject? I have already appealed to the girl herself, but she is as hard as flint, and as wicked as a witch. And Christopher is mad and blind. My dear ma'am, my son is being ruined before my eyes."

May at this point got a lively fear that the lady beside her was a little more than troubled in her mind. A marriage with the beautiful and wealthy Katherine seemed the strangest disguise in which ruin could attack a young man.

"I hope you are mistaken," she said.

"Well, well! This is no place for entering into particulars," Mrs. Lee said, waving her umbrella towards the coachman. "Another time I will pour out my troubles to you."

Here the carriage swept round before the castle entrance, and May had hardly time to protest that she was the very worst person in the world for a confidante. Figures were scattered on the lawn, watching for the travellers. Sir John welcomed May very kindly as his special guest; Lady Archbold gave her the outside of her cheek and the tips of her fingers, and Katherine embraced her. The greetings were made in the midst of laughter. Scouts had been sent to the hills in search of Mrs. Lee.

"Go away, young man," said that lady to the footman, "I will have my own son to help me out."

Christopher stepped forth with a good enough grace, blushing, smiling, and knit-

ting his brows. He was fond of his mother, and anxious to be good to her, but she was apt to try his patience before strangers.

"Why do you go roving about the hills like a gipsy, mother?" he said, deprecatingly, as she leaned on his shoulder, and heaved herself slowly to the ground.

"Why?" she said, turning upon him with meek wrath. "To keep you from harm if I can. But it seems I might as well stay at home."

"Quite as well," said Christopher, with angry eyes, and then laughed foolishly, and told his mother to go in and dress; that she was a dear old goose, and made great mistakes.

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

HOW AN EARL WAS HANGED.

In the year 1758 the tongues of Leicestershire gossips were busy with the wild doings and extraordinary behaviour of Laurence Shirley, the fourth Earl Ferrers, who lived at Staunton-Harold, near Ashby-de-la-Zouch, on the Staffordshire borders of Leicestershire.

The house of Ferrers boasted the bluest blood in Leicestershire, however much it had corrupted in the person of the turbulent and savage-tempered master of Staunton. The family, sprung from the royal Plantagenets, had fought and governed in England for generations. One sturdy ancestor, struck down beside the king's standard at the great battle of Shrewsbury, in the early part of the reign of Henry the Fourth, has been immortalised by Shakespeare. The second baronet of the family, Sir Henry Shirley, married one of the daughters of the last favourite of Elizabeth, the Earl of Essex. The son of Henry, Sir Robert Shirley, was kept close in the Tower by Cromwell for his obstinate adherence to the cause of Charles the First. Sir Robert's second son was summoned to parliament by Charles the Second, in reward for his father's loyalty, by the title of Lord Ferrers, of Chartley, as the descendant of one of the coheiresses of Robert, Earl of Essex, the title having been in abeyance since the head of Essex fell on the Tower Hill scaffold, and the precedency having been suspended since the reign of Edward the First. In 1711, Queen Anne created Robert Lord Ferrers, Viscount Tamworth, and Earl Ferrers. This nobleman had ruled over vast domains, but they were much reduced by being subdivided between his fifteen sons and twelve daughters, the abundant progeny of two wives. The first earl's titles fell to his second son, but he dying without issue, they passed to the next surviving brother, the ninth son, and he never marrying, they came eventually to the tenth son, the father of the unfortunate earl who ended his misspent life at Tyburn.

This unhappy nobleman—a man of violent passions—had a clear intellect and acknowledged abilities, when his brain was not sodden with wine and brandy. Then he became a madman, whom wealth and power only rendered more dangerous. In 1752 he married Mary, the daughter of Amos Melville, Esquire. (This lady afterwards married a brother of the Duke of Argyll.) Towards his wife the earl behaved with insane barbarity. A single instance of his groundless cruelty and ferocity will suffice. Lord Ferrers's brother and his wife were paying a visit at Staunton-Harold, and some dispute arose between the two gentlemen. One day, the countess being absent from the room, the earl rushed up-stairs with a large clasp-knife in his hand, and asked a servant whom he met where his lady was. The man replied, "In her own room," upon which Lord Ferrers ordered him to load a brace of pistols and follow him. The man obeyed the order, but, apprehensive of mischief, put no priming to the pistols. Lord Ferrers discovering this, swore at him, and taking the powder primed the pistols himself. He then threatened that if the man did not immediately go and shoot his brother, the captain, he would blow his brains out. The servant naturally hesitating to obey this order, the earl pulled the trigger of one of the pistols, but luckily it missed fire. The countess, coming in at this juncture, threw herself on her knees, and begged him to restrain his passion. The earl, brandishing the other pistol, sullenly swore at her, and threatened to blow her brains out if she continued to vex and thwart him. The servant, taking advantage of this lull to escape from the room, and running pale and scared to the captain's bedroom, reported to him all that had passed. Upon which the captain very wisely made his wife get up and dress herself, and they both left the house instantly, though it was then only two o'clock in the morning.

On all occasions when annoyed the earl flew into tremendous rages with his servants, and cuffed and beat them as if they had been slaves or convicts. On one oc-

casion, some oysters sent from London arriving tainted, the earl ordered one of his men to swear before the magistrates that the carrier had confessed to changing the barrels. The servant respectfully declining to take any such oath, the earl burst into one of his whirlwinds of passion, flew at the man, stabbed him in the breast with a knife, cut his head with a silver candlestick, and kicked him so terribly that he suffered for several years afterwards.

In 1756, the earl's temper was again at blood heat. At the Derby races he cruelly ran a mare (then in foal) against the horse of a Captain M. for fifty pounds, and won. In the evening over the wine, the captain, laughing about the earl's mare, offered to run his horse against her again at the end of seven months. Lord Ferrers, enraged at what his wild temper at once suspected to be a prearranged insult, instantly, though it was three o'clock in the morning, left Derby, and posted to his seat at Staunton-Harold. The next morning, as soon as he awoke, he tore at his bedroom bell, and called for his groom. He asked how Captain M. came to be told that the mare that ran at Derby was in foal. The groom denied that he had ever told any one about the mare. The next day the earl waited in vain for the captain and the rest of his Derby friends, whom he had insulted, and who naturally refused to expose themselves to fresh annoyances. Lord Ferrers, enraged at finding that no one came, fell on his footmen, and, rushing among them furious as Herod among the innocents, kicked and horsewhipped them all round, and threw everything at them that he could lift.

The natural end of the earl's mad rages was the divorce sued for and obtained by his long-suffering wife in 1758. Horace Walpole, writing to his crony and gossip, Sir Horace Mann, then at Florence, dilates of course upon the earl's divorce, and mentions some particulars of the earl's extraordinary conduct on the occasion, when he dared not throw boot-jacks at the counsel, or decanters at the judges. He did not attend the trial, in fact, at all, but, probably to affect a contemptuous indifference, rode the same day to Hertford assizes, to prosecute Page, a well-known highwayman, who had recently robbed him.

The disgrace and vexation attending the divorce seem to have pushed the earl just that step further which tumbled him over the precipice of madness. His paroxysms of passion grew more frequent and still more beyond his control. Whatever his fury suggested as such times, he at once endeavoured to effect. Taking lodgings at Muswell Hill, he one Sunday, in a momentary caprice, sent off a mounted messenger post-haste for a favourite mare which he had intrusted to the care of the landlord of a neighbouring inn. The messenger found the family absent; and, moreover, as the boy who kept the keys was also at church, the stable where the mare was could not be entered. On hearing this, the earl blazed up into madness, snatched up a swordstick, and, arming two of his servants with guns and sledge-hammers, hurried away to the inn. There meeting the landlord, the earl wounded him with his sword-cane, knocked down the frightened landlady, broke down the stable-doors, and carried off the mare in maniacal triumph. Yet in this same inn the earl frequently lodged, revelling with the village topers, alternately threatening and treating them; drinking scalding coffee out of the spout of a coffee-pot; breaking rows of glasses, and often threatening to smash the landlord's bureau and throttle the landlady. In calmer moments he was despondent, lamented his fits of rage, and begged people not to be offended with his ways.

In 1760, the trustees under the act of separation proposed Mr. Johnson, the earl's steward, as the receiver of rents for the countess's use. This Mr. Johnson had been bred up in the family from his youth, and was distinguished for his regularity in accounts, for his general respectability and tried fidelity. With an instinctive presentiment of evil, Johnson at first declined the trust, till specially urged to take it by his master, for at this time Johnson stood very high in the earl's opinion. They soon, however, became the deadliest of enemies, for Johnson refusing to in any way falsify the accounts, the earl swore at him for having been a witness for the countess at the trial for divorce, and for having lent his unhappy wife in her need fifty pounds.

The earl soon began to accuse Johnson of treachery, especially of having combined with the trustees to disappoint him of a contract for certain coal mines; he also attempted with might and main to turn him out of an advantageous farm, half a mile from Staunton-Harold, which he held under his lordship, but the trustees renewing the lease, the earl was baffled. This repulse raised the madman's passions to the last degree. Fired with drink, he now bent himself to murder. With all the

cunning of insanity the earl behaved to the faithful steward with great affability, and transacted business with him without reproaches or angry remonstrances. The family at Staunton-Harold, during this fatal lull, consisted of Mrs. Clifford, the earl's mistress, her four daughters, three men-servants, an old man, a boy, and three maids. On Sunday, January the 13th, 1760, the earl rode up quietly to the door of Johnson, who lived about half a mile from the hall, and, with his usual brusque voice and manner, desired him to come to Staunton between three and four o'clock in the afternoon of the following Friday. On the day named, just after the two o'clock dinner of the family, Lord Ferrers went into the still-house, a semi-detached building, where Mrs. Clifford and the children lodged, and sent her for a walk to her father's house, two miles off. He then sent all the men-servants away on some fool's errand or other. Mrs. Clifford and the children were not to return till half-past five. He had a clear field in which to carry out his no doubt long-matured purpose. The three maids could not stay his arm, and would be too frightened even to spread an alarm in the outbuildings.

At the appointed hour the unconscious steward arrived at the house prepared for his slaughter. Elizabeth Burgham, the maid, smilingly let him in, and showed him to the door of his lordship's room.

Lord Ferrers sullenly came to the door, and ordered the steward to go and wait in the still-house. In about ten minutes Lord Ferrers came out, called the steward into his room, and at once, to his surprise, locked the door, and took out the key. Hitherto Johnson had felt no alarm; but now he saw the earl's face darken, and his brow knit, as the earl turned on him angrily, ordering him at once to pay certain disputed sums, and, after curses and threats, producing a prepared paper, "a confession of villany," as he called it, which he insisted on Johnson then and there signing. The steward refused to sign any such document, and, half angry, half alarmed, expostulated and declared his innocence of any evil intention against his lordship. But the madness of revenge had entire rule now over that infirm and fierce nature. The earl, snatching a loaded pistol from the deep side-pocket of his square-cut laced coat, cocked it and presented it, shouting, "Kneel down."

The astonished man, afraid to refuse, knelt on one knee.

"Down on your other knee," roared the earl, so loud as to be heard in the kitchen. "Down, and declare what you have done against Lord Ferrers. Your time is come. You must die."

Then he fired. The pistol-ball entered the steward's body just under the last false rib, and penetrated the bowels. Johnson did not fall, but, pale and suffering, staggered to a seat, uttering groans and appeals for mercy. Lord Ferrers drew out a second loaded pistol, still shouting to the dying man to sign the paper, but did not fire again. In about twenty minutes or so he grew calm enough to unlock the door, go into the passage and call out, "Who is there?" to the frightened women who had huddled together for safety in the wash-house. On the boldest and most compassionate of them coming to where the wounded man sat, pressing his side and groaning, he sent her at once for some one to help in getting the steward up-stairs to bed. Lord Ferrers, who, wonderful to relate, was perfectly sober, now despatched a mounted messenger for Mr. Kirkland, a surgeon of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, two miles distant, and then went himself up to the wounded man, whom the maid was tending, and asked him how he found himself. The steward faintly replied that he was dying, and begged his murderer to send for his children. Lord Ferrers at once sent for the steward's daughter. On her arrival Lord Ferrers sent one of the maids up with her to her father's room, and soon after followed himself, in great perturbation, being now fully conscious of the danger. Johnson being nearly insensible, Lord Ferrers pulled down the clothes and sponged the orifice of the wound with arquebusade water. Then he went down-stairs, and drank himself drunk with great draughts of beer. The messenger soon after returned with the surgeon, to whom Lord Ferrers frankly confessed his violence, but said he thought Johnson was more frightened than hurt.

"I intended," he said, "to have shot him dead, for he was a villain, and deserved to die; but now I have spared his life, I desire you to do what you can for him."

He also declared that no one should lay hands on him, and that he would shoot dead whoever attempted it. Mr. Kirkland, knowing the man's fiery temper, and seeing that he was partly drunk, assured him that there was no danger, and that no violence would be offered him. On the surgeon probing the wound, Lord Ferrers produced the pistol, described the direc-

tion in which he had held it, and expressed surprise that the bullet should have lodged at all, as only a few days before a ball from the same pistol had gone through an inch-and-a-half plank. The surgeon then went down-stairs to prepare dressings, and the earl went back again to his beer jug. As he got more and more drunk, fits of compassion alternated with storms of rage and pangs of fear, till his reason seemed almost tottering. He lamented his rage, then trembled for himself, and the next moment was rushing up-stairs to Johnson's room to rouse the dying man, to pull his legs, to try to tear off the bedclothes, and to threaten to shoot "the villain" through the head, all the while at intervals promising to maintain Johnson's daughter and the whole family if they would promise not to prosecute. Mrs. Clifford, who had returned, alarmed at the earl's violence, and afraid of further ill consequences, suggested that poor Johnson should be removed to his own house, but that set Lord Ferrers again raging, and he screamed: "He shall not be moved. I will keep him here to plague the villain!"

Between eleven and twelve the murderer went gloomily to bed, entreating the surgeon to make things all right, and, above all, to prevent his being seized, especially leaving word to see him in the morning, however early he left. In the night the doctor began to foresee new dangers with the next daylight. In fresh ravings the earl might shoot Johnson as he lay in bed, or, what was even worse (from his the doctor's point of view), he might, if the steward died at the hall, shoot him (the doctor) for having let the man die. So, in the darkness, Kirkland stole off to the steward's house, and rigged up an easy-chair, with side poles, as a sedan. About two o'clock in the morning Johnson was quietly removed. The poor fellow lingered till nine in the morning, and then expired.

The news of the crime and its results aroused the neighbours, who armed themselves and bore down on the hall. As they crowded murmuring into the court-yard, the earl, half dressed, his stockings down, and carrying his garters in his hand, passed towards the stable as if to take horse and fly, the news of the steward's death having no doubt already reached him. A bold Leicestershire man, named Springthorpe, at once pushed to the front, and presenting a pistol, summoned the madman to surrender. The earl, however, putting his hand in his pocket as if to pull out a pistol, alarmed Springthorpe, who knew the man, and as he stepped back among his friends, the earl ran again into the house, bolted all the doors, and apparently prepared for a desperate resistance. The angry crowd blockaded his house, but no one appeared. About two hours after, however, the earl thrust his wild face out of a garret window, and called out, "How is Johnson?" Springthorpe shouted up the terrible words, "He is dead." The earl replied, "You're a liar, d—— you. I'll believe nobody but Kirkland."

On being solemnly assured that the steward was dead, the earl at last desired the people to disperse, and he would surrender. The next moment, with all a madman's desultoriness, he asked some one to bring him some meat and wine. Then cursing every one in a sudden rage, he said he would not be taken at all, and, slamming the window, disappeared.

Two hours later the earl was seen strutting about his bowling-green, probably quite drunk by this time, and armed with a huge bell-mouthed blunderbuss, two or three pistols, and a dagger. They closed in upon him, however, and Austin, a collier, resolutely ran in at him and seized him, without even a shot being fired, or any scuffle taking place. The moment his hands were tied he began to glory in the fact of having, as he said, killed a villain. He was taken to Ashby-de-la-Zouch and locked up in a public-house till the coroner's jury brought in a verdict of "wilful murder," when the earl was driven off to Leicester Jail. A fortnight later Lord Ferrers was taken to London in his own landau, dressed like a jockey, in a close riding-frock, jockey boots, cap, and a plush shirt.

The House of Peers committed the murderer to the Tower. He was placed in a round building near the drawbridge, and strictly guarded. Two warders constantly attended in his room: a third waited at the door. At the bottom of the stairs, two soldiers stood with fixed bayonets, and one sentinel paced at the door of the tower. The great gates were shut an hour before the usual time while this miserable criminal remained a prisoner. Mrs. Clifford and her children came up to town and lodged in Tower-street, but the interchanged messages became at last so troublesome to the warders that they had to be restricted to one letter a day. His children were occasionally allowed to see him. The earl lived regularly, and drank his quart of wine a day. His behaviour in general was rea-

sonable, but at times, when denouncing the murdered steward, his passion broke all bounds.

The trial of Lord Ferrers took place at Westminster Hall on the 16th of April, 1760, Lord Henley (afterwards Earl of Northington), the Chancellor, presiding as high steward over the one hundred and forty peers present. The criminal, "bad and villanous in figure," as Horace Walpole says, pleaded insanity, against his own inclination, to please his family. The earl's two brothers attended to prove lunacy in the blood.

The plea of madness not holding, the worthless earl was found guilty by the unanimous voice of his peers, and was sentenced to be duly hung, like any low-bred cut-throat, and afterwards to be anatomised, on the 21st of April. He was afterwards respited till the 5th of May. While awaiting his sentence, Lord Ferrers did the little he could to atone for his crime by leaving thirteen hundred pounds in India bonds to the children of Mr. Johnson: a just legacy, that nevertheless remained long unpaid. He also left sixty pounds a year to Mrs. Clifford, and one thousand pounds to each of his natural daughters. He petitioned very hard to be beheaded in private on Tower Green; but with this request King George very properly refused to comply. His legacies were, however, permitted to be held as legal.

In prison the earl now drank as much as he could get, and continued to act in a way that bordered as nearly as possible on madness. The very night that sentence was passed, he played at piquet, for money, with the warders, and would have remained all night over the cards had they not refused to play after midnight. On the governor lessening his rather excessive allowance of wine, the earl artfully consented to an interview with one of his brothers, his only object being to get his brother to intercede for more claret. The moment this request was granted, the earl said coolly to his brother: "Now is as good a time as any to take leave of you—adieu!"

So the door closed upon the brother for ever, and the mad earl shuffled the cards, cut for a new deal, and went gaily on with his piquet.

The earl's aunt, that excellent woman the Countess of Huntingdon, the great patroness of Whitfield, frequently visited the prisoner in the Tower, but nothing could restore his mind to a rational balance, or soften his bull-dog heart. He told the chaplain frankly that he was a deist, and could not believe in justification by faith. He boasted that he had never led the faith of any one astray. He thought all persons who assailed the religion of a country enemies of society, and he blamed Lord Bolingbroke for disseminating sceptical theories. As for Johnson, he said the affair was under peculiar circumstances, and he had met with so many crosses and vexations that he scarcely knew what he did, but he was graciously pleased to say that he bore no malice against the unfortunate man. The chaplain finally hinted something about the world requiring satisfaction.

"Sir," replied the earl, with allowable impatience, and more good sense than usual, "sir, what have I to do now with the world? I am going to pay a forfeit life. What do I care what the world thinks of me?"

The morning of the execution he began the following lines, when the warders, coming to tell him his carriage was ready, interrupted the composition:

> In doubt I live, in doubt I die,
> Yet undismayed the vast abyss I'll try;
> And plunge into eternity
> Through rugged paths.

The next earl who is hung may perhaps carry on the poem. About nine A.M. the procession left the Tower-gate. First came a body of constables to clear a passage through the dense crowd, patrols of horse and foot guards followed; then came the sheriff's carriage, the horses decorated with ribbons. Last of all came Lord Ferrers in his own landau, drawn by six horses, his old coachman crying all the way, and almost unable to drive. The earl was dressed in his wedding suit of white silk, richly embroidered with silver—a costume, as he said bitterly, "as fit for one day as the other." When he saw the vast crowd jostling all the way up Holborn and the Oxford-road, he remarked calmly: "Ah! I suppose they never saw a lord hanged before."

At the Tower-gate Mr. Sheriff Vaillant, a French bookseller, with many apologies, took his seat in the landau. "It was very disagreeable to him," he said, with perfect good manners, "to wait on his lordship on so awful an occasion, but he would endeavour to render his situation as agreeable as possible." Earl Ferrers asked the polite sheriff if he had ever seen such a crowd before. The sheriff had not. The

mob was so great that it took the landau three hours to reach the Tyburn fields.

At St. Giles's the earl wanted to stop and have a draught of wine-and-water, but the sheriff suggested that the halt would only draw together an unmanageable crowd, and Lord Ferrers replied: "That is true. I say no more. By no means stop."

He then remarked that the antecedents of death were more terrible than death itself. There was a scaffold covered with black baize under the scaffold in honour of the criminal, and the place where the earl was to stand to die was eighteen inches higher than the rest. At the gallows he expressed a wish to bid Mrs. Clifford farewell, but the sheriff, suggesting it might unman him, the earl replied: "If you, sir, think I am wrong, I submit."

He then gave the sheriff a pocket-book containing a bank-note, and a ring, and a purse of guineas for Mrs. Clifford. A troop of horse quite unnecessarily formed a circle round the man, whom not one person in the crowd had the slightest desire to rescue. The criminal ascended the black steps calm and collected, and joined the chaplain in repeating the Lord's Prayer, which he stopped to pronounce a fine composition, and he uttered the words, "O Lord forgive me all my errors, pardon all my sins," with great fervour. He then presented his watch to the sheriff, and, by mistake, gave five guineas (for your hanging was then an expensive luxury) to the assistant-executioner, which led to an unseemly wrangling between the two learned legal functionaries, which must have almost upset the earl's temper for the last time at the unbearable delay of business. Lord Ferrers was the first sufferer by the new drop, just then introduced in place of the barbarous cart, ladder, and mediæval three-cornered gibbet, such as Hogarth has shown us in the last scene of the Idle Apprentice. The earl's neckcloth being removed, and a white cap drawn from his pocket and put on, his arms were bound with a black sash, and the halter slipped round his bull neck.

During the hour and a half that the earl's body hung, the sheriff and some friends quietly partook of a cosey little lunch. The body was then placed in a coffin lined with quilted white satin, and conveyed to Surgeon's Hall to be dissected. The surgeons universally declared that they had never seen greater promise of long life in anybody that had come under their notice. The earl, in his laced white silk coat, was placed upright in his coffin as in a sentry-box, and remained for some time, under care of a sentinel, under the inspection of a curious crowd. His lordship's cocked-hat and the severed rope were laid at his feet. On the lid of the coffin the eager crowds read these words:

"Laurence Earl Ferrers, suffered May 5th, 1760."

LOVE'S DANGER.

A SUDDEN glance, a hint no others guess,
The sweet soft subtle cadence of a word,
And all the surface of a life is stirred
To the light rippling waves of happiness.

A jarring jest, an act unseen or slighted,
A shy allusion missed, a mocking smile;
And joy and hope and peace so glad erewhile,
Shrink back like April buds by east winds blighted.

Ah, mighty arbiters of heart and life,
Ye loved ones! know your sceptre's boundless sway;
Nor in a careless hour fling gems away,
Whose worth would buckler you through storm and strife.

The flowers of joy as fragile are, as fair;
The leaves may wither, though the roots endure;
Let Love's strong hand their first bright bloom secure,
Or dread to lose the tender glory there.

THE IDLE LAKE.

HE who is acquainted with the Idle Lake should be thoroughly versed in the topography of mythical localities—should be familiar with the Bower of Bliss, the House of Fame, and the Cave of Despair—with Doubting Castle, Vanity Fair, and the Valley of the Shadow—with the Debateable Land, and the Islands of the Blest—with Armida's Garden, and that fearfully beautiful Arbour of Proserpine, where nothing but that which was noxious grew. All these legendary regions should strengthen in the beholder the love and wonderment which, as a confirmed lotus-eater, an inveterate truant, and an incorrigible sluggard, he should feel for the Idle Lake.

It is situated—anywhere; and why not in Fairyland? Why should I not chronicle its bearings, thus? Once upon a time a certain Sir Cymochles, a mailed knight certainly, who had the privilege of the entrée at Arthur's Court on levee days, whatever the privilege of the entrée may mean, but otherwise of no very bright repute, was wandering up and down "miscellaneously" (a common practice in Faëry), accompanied by one Atin, a person of unquestionably bad character, and in quest of another chi-

valrous person, hight Sir Guyon, with the wicked intent him to kill and slay. Sir Cymochles, on this felonious errand bent, chanced to come to a river, and, moored by the bank thereof, what should he discern but a little "gondelay," or gondola, spick and span, shining like a new pin, and so trimly bedecked with boughs and cunningly woven arbours, that the tiny cabin at the stern looked like a floating forest. In this delightful wherry there sat a lady fair to see, gaily dressed, and with a quantity of wild flowers in her hair. She was seemingly of a frivolous and irreverent temperament, and (the legends say) sat in the gondola grinning like a Cheshire cat. When she ceased to grin, she giggled, or hummed a refrain from some idle ditty. Now Sir Cymochles was desirous of passing to the other side of the river, and he asked the giggling lady if she would give him a cast across. Said the lady tittering, "As welcome, Sir Knight, as the flowers in May;" but she was not so ready to oblige Atin: stoutly, indeed, refusing him boat-room. Possibly she doubted his capacity to trim the boat properly, or haply she thought that he could not pay the ferry fee. So Atin was, like Lord Ullin in the ballad, "left lamenting" on the shore, and Sir Cymochles, with the grinning lady, went on a rare cruise. Away slid the shallow ship, "more swift than swallows skim the liquid sky;" but the behaviour of the merry mariner on the voyage was, I regret to say, most improper. She possessed a whole storehouse of droll anecdotes, and while she told them she laughed till the tears rolled down her pretty naughty face. It is certain that she "chaffed" Sir Cymochles, and I am very much afraid that she tickled him; but he was rather pleased than otherwise with "her light behaviour and loose dalliance." Her name, she said, was Phædria. The inland sea, from which the river ran, and on whose bosom the gondelay was floating, was named, she remarked, the Idle Lake.

How the pair came at last to an island waste and void that floated in the midst of that great lake; how the laughing lady conducted the bemused knight to a chosen plot of fertile land, "amongst wide oases set, like a little nest;" how in that painted oasis there was "no tree whose branches did not bravely spring, no branch on which a fine bird did not sit;" how she fed his eyes and senses with false delights; how she led him to a shady vale, and laid him down on a grassy plain; how he—oh! idiotic knight—took off his helmet, and laid his disarmed head in her lap; how she, as he sank into slumber, lulled him with a wondrously beautiful love lay, in which she sang of "the lily, lady of the flow'ring field," and of "the fleur de lys, her lovely paramour;" how, subsequently, steeping with strong narcotics the eyelids of that bamboozled knight, she left him snoring, and hied her to her gondelay again; and how eventually she, plying at the Wapping Old Stairs of Faëry, like a jolly, wicked young waterwoman as she was, picked up Sir Guyon, and him inveigled to the Idle Island in that Idle Lake; and how there was a terrific broadsword combat of two about that "ladye debonnaire"—are not all these things written in the chronicle of the land which never was — in the Faërie Queene of Edmund Spenser? If you be wise, you will take the marvellous poem with you as your only travelling companion the next time you journey to the Idle Lake.

I am not habitually idle. I cannot afford it. Highly as I appreciate the delight of doing nothing, of lying in bed and being fed with a spoon, or of eating peaches from the wall with my hands in my pockets, like Thomson, I am yet constrained, as a rule, to work for a certain number of hours in the course of every day or night, in order to obtain a certain quantity of household bread. I have been wandering these many years past in a wilderness of work, not unrelieved, however, by occasional oases. I remember them all, and dwell on the remembrance of them with infinite delight; even as that stolid wretch in hodden grey, tramping the treadmill's intolerable stairs, may dwell upon that soft and happy Sybarite time he passed after he was so lucky as to find the gentleman's gold watch and chain in the gentleman's pocket, and before he was "wanted" by the myrmidons of a justice which would take no denial, and stigmatised his treasure trove as plunder, and his lucky find as an act of larceny. A jovial time he had: all tripe and dominoes, and shag tobacco and warm ale. It was an oasis in his desert life of walking about in search of something to steal; and although there are poets and philosophers who maintain that the memory of happier days is a sorrow's crown of sorrow, I have always been of a contrary opinion; holding that, as hope springs eternal in the human breast, a man is seldom so miserable but that, if he has been already happy, he cherishes the aspiration of being happy again. He may be conjuring up visions of future tripe and warm ale, more

succulent and more stimulating than ever: that tramping man in hodden grey.

I am mindful of an oasis in Hampshire, and of one in Surrey; of a lotus-garden (where I overeat myself once) in an island in the Adriatic, and of a Valley of Poppies in North Africa. I know a bank in Andalusia on which I have reclined, pleasantly yawning, and drawing idle diagrams with my walking-stick in the sands of time at my feet. I know a cascade, far, far up in the mountains of Mexico, among the silver mines, the silvery plashing of whose downcome rings in the ear of my soul now, drowning the actual and prosaic lapping of the water "coming in" at Number Nine, next door. I am braced up tight between the shafts, blinkers block my eyes, and a cruel bit chafes my mouth, while those tearing wheels behind me seem pressing on my heels, and ever and anon the smacking whip of the driver scathes my sides; but do you think I forget the paddock in which I kicked up my heels, or resting my nose on the top of the fence, calmly contemplated the hacks on the highway, bridled and bitted, pursued by wheels, and quivering under the whipcord? Do you think that I forget the Idle Lake?

I had been to the wars when I came upon it. It was an ugly war in which I was concerned, a desultory, unsatisfactory, semi-guerilla warfare, in the Italian Tyrol. Our commander was a famous Hero, but his troops were, to use the American expression, "a little mixed," and I am afraid that in several of the encounters in which we were engaged we ran away. We got scarcely anything to eat, and we slept more frequently in the open air than under a roof. It was a campaign performed by snatches, and interspersed with armistices; and now and again I used to come down out of the mountains, ragged, dirty, hungry, demoralised, and "exceeding fierce," and journey to Milan for letters, money, and clean linen, to have a warm bath, and enjoy a little civilisation. I am afraid that the guests at the Hotel Cavour, in the capital of Lombardy, formed anything but a favourable opinion of my manners; still, if I did nearly swallow my spoon as well as my soup, and occasionally seize a mutton cutlet by the shank, and gnaw it wolfishly, where was the harm? It was so long since I had had a decent dinner; nor did I know, when I got back to the mountains, when I might get another.

It was on one of these expeditions to Milan that Eugenius Mildman and I struck up a friendship. He was as mild as his name; a beaming, pious, gushing, amiable creature, as innocent as a lamb, as brave as a lion—I marked his conduct once in a battle, from which, with the prudence of a non-combatant camp-follower, I timeously retreated—and as affectionate as a young gazelle. I wish they would keep such exemplary Englishmen as Mildman's race in England; but the good fellows have a strange fancy for wasting their sweetness on the desert air of foreign countries; they do good at Florence, and blush to find it fame at Malaga; they act the part of the Man of Ross in Norway, and their right hand knoweth not what their left hand doeth at Smyrna; they enrich Thebes and beautify Tadmor in the wilderness; and, with deplorable frequency, and in the prime of life, they die of low fever at Damascus. Mildman was just the kind of charitable soul to die at Damascus, universally regretted, yet with a life wasted, somehow, in good deeds, done at the wrong time, in the wrong place, for the benefit of the wrong kind of people. He was beautifully purposeless when I met him; was undecided as to whether he should publish a series of translations from the Sarmatian anthology, in aid of the Polish emigration, or raise a loan in furtherance of public (denominational) education in the republic of Guatimozin. Meanwhile he had been fighting a little with Garibaldi. I need scarcely add that he was a spiritualist and a homœopathist, and that he occasionally spoke, not in the strongest terms of censure, of the community of Oneida Creek, the Agapemone, the followers of Johanna Southcote, and the Unknown Tongues. It was a toss up, I used to warn Mildman, between La Trappe and Colney Hatch for him. "Do something practical," I used to say to Mildman. "Pay a premium to a stockbroker, and spend a year in his office. Article yourself to a sharp solicitor. Enlist in the Sappers and Miners. You have plenty of money. Take chambers in St. James's, and discount bills at sixty per cent. Make a voyage to Pernambuco before the mast. Go in for the realities." But he wouldn't; and I am afraid that he will die at Damascus, universally regretted, and that his courier will run away with his dressing-case and his circular notes.

I shall be ever grateful to Eugenius Mildman, for he made me acquainted with the Idle Lake. It was during one of my expeditions to Milan, and broiling summer weather. The Scala was closed; and at the Canobbiana (the operatic succursal to the grander theatre) the tenor had a wooden

leg, the "prima donna assoluta" was fifty-three years of age, and the "prima ballerina" was slightly humped in the back, and was endowed with but a single eye; so, as you may imagine, the Canobbiana entertainments did not draw very crowded audiences. The garden of the usually pleasant Caffé Cova, where we dined (chiefly on macaroni and fried intestines), "al fresco," had become a nuisance, owing to the continual presence of noisy patriots, smoking bad "Cavours," and screeching about the incapacity of General de la Marmora, and the shameful tergiversation of the Emperor Napoleon the Third in the matter of the Dominio Veneto. The caricatures in the Spirito Folletto were wofully stupid, and altogether Milan had become socially uninhabitable. Mildman and I determined to start on a ramble. We got to Chiavenna, and so, by Vico Soprano, to St. Moritz. Thence, hiring a little "calescino," a picturesque kind of one-horse chaise, we made Samaden, and for three weeks or so dodged in and out of the minor Alpine passes—the Bernina, the Tonale, and so forth—taking to mule-back when the roads were impracticable for the "calescino," and coming out into the Tyrol at last somewhere near Storo, where we rejoined our famous Hero and his red-shirted army. After another skirmish or so — we called them battles —there was another armistice, and back I came to Milan, but this time alone. I shook hands with Mildman, and the last I saw of him was his slender figure bestriding a mule in a mountain gorge, and in the setting sun. He was departing in quest of windmills to charge, or forlorn Dulcineas to rescue; he was bound for Damascus, or the "ewigkeit." What do I know about it? Farewell, excellent Quixotic man.

But I went back to Mediolanum; and for the next eight weeks I was continually running backwards and forwards to the Idle Lake. I had grown to love it. I loved even the quaint old Lombard town from which the lake derives, not its sobriquet, but its real name. There are two of the dirtiest and dearest hotels in Northern Italy in that town; yet I was fond of them both. There are as many evil smells in the town as in Cologne; yet the imperfect drainage, and the too apparent presence of decaying animal and vegetable matter in the market-place, did not affect me. Was I not on the shore of the great, calm, blue lake, with the blue sky above, and the blue mountains in the distance, and the whole glorious landscape shot with threads of gold by the much embroidering sun? I had made the acquaintance of a Milanese banker who had a charming villa on the opposite side of the lake, say at Silva Selvaggia. He had a pretty yacht, in which many a time we made voyages on the idle expanse, voyages which reminded me of the cruise of Sir Cymochles. My host was an enthusiastic fresh-water sailor, so much so that the lake boatman used to call him, "Il Signore della Vela." He was perpetually splicing his mainbrace, and reefing his topsail. Sail! we did nothing but sail: that is to say when we were not breakfasting, or dining, or smoking, or drinking "asti spumante," or dozing, or playing with a large French poodle that was rated on the books of the yacht, and I think did more work than any of the crew (one man, very like Fra Diavolo in a check shirt, and without shoes and stockings, and a boy who played the guitar), for he was incessantly racing from the bow to the stern, and barking at the passing boats. We spent at least eight hours out of the twenty-four on the water; and when there was a dead calm we lay to and went to sleep. At breakfast time the Perseveranza, the chief journal of Lombardy, came to hand, and our hostess would read out the telegrams for our edification. After that we bade the Perseveranza go hang, and strolled down towards the yacht. I never read anything, I never wrote anything, I never thought of anything, while I was floating on the Idle Lake, save of what a capital thing it would be to be idle for ever.

In our boating excursions we frequently landed at different points on the lake, and called upon people. They were always glad to see us, and to entertain us with fruit, wine, cigars, sonatas on the pianoforte (if there were ladies present), and perfectly idle conversation. I never yet learnt the "nice conduct of a clouded cane;" but I think that I acquired, during my sojourn on the Idle Lake, the art of twirling a fan, and of cutting paper. Had I stayed long enough I might have learned to whistle: that grand accomplishment of the perfect idler. By degrees I became conscious that my visiting acquaintance was extending among a very remarkable set of people; and that nearly everybody occupying the dainty palazzi and trim little villas nestling among the vines, and oranges, and olives of the Idle Lake was Somebody. It will be no violation of confidence I hope, and no ungrateful requital of hospitality, to hint that at Bella Riviera to the north-east was situated the charming country house of Madame la Princesse

Hatzoff, the consort, indeed, of the well-known General Adjutant and Grand Chamberlain to His Imperial Majesty the Tsar of all the Russias. M. le Prince resides on his extensive estates in the government of Tamboff. Some say that he is sojourning in a yet remoter government, that of Tobolsk in Siberia, where he is occupied in mining pursuits in the way of rolling quartz stone in the wheelbarrow to which he, as a life convict, is chained. The Princess Hatzoff passes her winters either in Paris or Florence, her springs in England, her autumns at Homburg or Baden, and her summers on the Idle Lake. She is enormously rich, although M. le Prince, during their brief wedded life, did his best to squander the splendid fortune she brought him. She is growing old now; her clustering ringlets—she was renowned for her ringlets—are silvery white; her shoulders are arched, and her hands tremble ominously as she holds her cards at piquet; but her complexion is still exquisitely clear, and she is not indebted to art for the roses on her cheeks. Her feet are deliciously small and shapely, and she is fond of exhibiting them, in their open-worked silk stockings, and their coquettish little slippers with the high heels and the pink rosettes. Forty years ago you used to see waxen models, coloured to the life, of those feet (with the adjoining ankles), ay, and of those half-paralysed hands, in the shops of the Palais Royal and Regent-street, and the Great Moskaia at Petersburg. Forty years ago her portraits, in half a hundred costumes and a whole hundred attitudes, were to be found in every printseller's window in Europe. Forty years ago she was not Madame la Princesse Hatzoff, but Mademoiselle Marie Fragioli, the most famous opera-dancer of her age. The world has quite forgotten her, but I doubt whether she has as completely forgotten the world: nay, I fancy that in her sumptuous retreat she sometimes rages, and is wretched at the thought that age, decrepitude, and her exalted rank compel her to wear long clothes, and that in the airiest of draperies she can no longer spring forward to the footlights, night after night, to be deafened by applause, and pelted with bouquets, and to find afterwards at the stage-door more bouquets, with diamond bracelets for holders, and reams of billet-doux on pink note-paper. Those triumphs, for her, are all over. They are enjoyed by sylphs as fair, as nimble, and as caressed as she has been; and when she reads of their successes in the newspapers a bitter sickness comes across her. What artificer likes to reflect upon his loss of competency in his art? Are retired ambassadors, are generals hopelessly on half-pay, are superannuated statesmen, or the head-masters of public schools, who have retired on handsome pensions, so very happy, think you? Not so, perchance. Ambition survives capacity very often. The diplomatist clings to his despatch-bag, the soldier to his bâton of command, the minister to his red box, the pedant to his rod, the actor to his sock and buskin or his comic mask, long after the verdict of superfluity has been delivered; long after the dread fiat of inefficiency has gone forth—the fiat proclaiming that the bellows are burned, that the lead is consumed of the fire, and that the founder worketh in vain.

All round the coasts of the Idle Lake there were retired celebrities. The district was a kind of prosperous Patmos, a St. Helena tenanted by voluntary exiles, a jovial Cave of Adullam. Here vegetated an enriched director of promenade concerts; there enjoyed his sumptuous "otium" the ex-proprietor of dwarfs and giants, of learned pigs and industrious fleas; and in yonder Swiss châlet lived a lion-tamer, much famed on the Idle Lake for his proficiency in breeding rabbits. Millionaire patentees of cough lozenges, bronchitic wafers, anti-asthmatical cigarettes, universal pills, and Good Samaritan ointments, abounded on the Lake; together with a group of wealthy veteran tenors, baritones, and bassi, several Parisian restaurateurs and café keepers who had realised large fortunes; a contractor of one of the Rhine watering-place gambling tables; many affluent linendrapers and court milliners, and an English ex-butcher from Bond-street, as rich as Crœsus. All who were out of debt, and had nothing to grumble at, seemed to have gathered themselves together on these shores, leading a tranquil, dozy, dawdling kind of existence, so that you might have imagined them to be partakers before their time of the delights of some Eastern Elysium, and to be absorbed in the perpetual contemplation of Buddha.

But my days of relaxation on the banks of the Idle Lake came, with that autumn, to an end; and away I went into the "ewigkeit," always into the "ewigkeit," to be tossed about in more wars and rumours of wars, and rebellions and revolutions. For years I have not set eyes upon the Idle Lake; but I often dream of it, and puzzle myself to determine whether it is situated somewhere between the Lake of

Garda and the Lake of Como. But that there is such a Lake, and that it is gloriously Idle, I am very certain.

STAGE BANQUETS.

A VETERAN actor of inferior fame once expressed his extreme dislike to what he was pleased to term "the sham wine parties" of Macbeth and others. He was aweary of the Barmecide banquets of the stage, of affecting to quaff with gusto imaginary wine out of empty pasteboard goblets, and of making believe to have an appetite for wooden apples and "property" comestibles. He was in every sense a poor player, and had often been a very hungry one. He took especial pleasure in remembering the entertainments of the theatre in which the necessities of performance, or regard for rooted tradition, involved the setting of real edible food before the actors. At the same time he greatly lamented the limited number of dramas in which these precious opportunities occurred.

He had grateful memories of the rather obsolete Scottish melodrama of Cramond Brig; for in this work old custom demanded the introduction of a real sheep's head with accompanying "trotters." He told of a North British manager who was wont—especially when the salaries he was supposed to pay were somewhat in arrear, and he desired to keep his company in good humour and, may be, alive—to produce this play on Saturday nights. For some days before the performance the dainties that were destined to grace it underwent exhibition in the green-room. A label bore the inscription: "This sheep's head will appear in the play of Cramond Brig on next Saturday night. God save the King." "It afforded us all two famous dinners," reveals our veteran. "We had a large pot of broth made with the head and feet; these we ate on Saturday night; the broth we had on Sunday." So in another Scottish play, the Gentle Shepherd of Allan Ramsay, it was long the custom on stages north of the Tweed to present a real haggis, although niggard managers were often tempted to substitute for the genuine dish a far less savoury if more wholesome mess of oatmeal. But a play more famous still for the reality of its victuals, and better known to modern times, was Prince Hoare's musical farce, No Song, no Supper. A steaming hot boiled leg of lamb and turnips may be described as quite the leading character in this entertainment. Without this appetising addition the play has never been represented. There is a story, however, which one can only hope is incorrect, of an impresario of Oriental origin, who supplying the necessary meal, yet subsequently fined his company all round on the ground that they had "combined to destroy certain of the properties of the theatre."

There are many other plays in the course of which genuine food is consumed on the stage. But some excuse for the generally fictitious nature of theatrical repasts is to be found in the fact that eating, during performance, is often a very difficult matter for the actors to accomplish. Michael Kelly in his Memoirs relates that he was required to eat part of a fowl in the supper scene of a bygone operatic play called A House to be Sold. Bannister at rehearsal had informed him that it was very difficult to swallow food on the stage. Kelly was incredulous, however. "But strange as it may appear," he writes, "I found it a fact that I could not get down a morsel. My embarrassment was a great source of fun to Bannister and Suett, who were both gifted with the accommodating talent of stage feeding. Whoever saw poor Suett as the lawyer in No Song no Supper, tucking in his boiled leg of lamb, or in the Siege of Belgrade, will be little disposed to question my testimony to the fact." From this account, however, it is manifest that the difficulty of "stage feeding," as Kelly calls it, is not invariably felt by all actors alike. And probably, although the appetites of the superior players may often fail them, the supernumerary or the representative of minor characters could generally contrive to make a respectable meal if the circumstances of the case supplied the opportunity.

The difficulty that attends eating on the stage does not, it would seem, extend to drinking, and sometimes the introduction of real and potent liquors during the performance has lead to unfortunate results. Thus Whincop, who, in 1747, published a tragedy called Scanderbeg, adding to it "a List of all the Dramatic Authors, with some Account of their Lives," &c., describes a curious occurrence at the Theatre Royal in 1693. A comedy entitled The Wary Widow, or Sir Noisy Parrot, written by one Higden, and now a very scarce book, had been produced; but on the first representation, "the author had contrived so much drinking of punch in the play that the actors almost all got drunk, and were unable to get through with it, so that

the audience was dismissed at the end of the third act." Upon subsequent performances of the comedy no doubt the management reduced the strength of the punch, or substituted some harmless beverage, toast-and-water perhaps, imitative of that ardent compound so far as mere colour was concerned. There have been actors, however, who have refused to accept the innocent semblance of vinous liquor supplied by the management, and especially when, as part of their performance, they were required to simulate intoxication. A certain representative of Cassio was wont to take to the theatre a bottle of claret from his own cellar, whenever he was called upon to sustain that character. It took possession of him too thoroughly, he said, with a plausible air, to allow of his affecting inebriety after holding an empty goblet to his lips, or swallowing mere toast-and-water or small beer. Still his precaution had its disadvantages. The real claret he consumed might make his intemperance somewhat too genuine and accurate; and his portrayal of Cassio's speedy return to sobriety might be in such wise very difficult of accomplishment. So there have been players of dainty taste, who, required to eat in the presence of the audience, have elected to bring their own provisions, from some suspicion of the quality of the food provided by the management. We have heard of a clown who, entering the theatre nightly to undertake the duties of his part, was observed to carry with him always a neat little paper parcel. What did it contain? bystanders inquired of each other. Well, in the comic scenes of pantomime it is not unusual to see a very small child, dressed perhaps as a charity-boy, crossing the stage, bearing in his hands a slice of bread-and-butter. The clown steals this article of food and devours it; whereupon the child, crying aloud, pursues him hither and thither about the stage. The incident always excites much amusement; for in pantomimes the world is turned upside-down, and moral principles have no existence; cruelty is only comical, and outrageous crime the best of jokes. The paper parcel borne to the theatre by the clown under mention enclosed the bread-and-butter that was to figure in the harlequinade. "You see I'm a particular feeder," the performer explained. "I can't eat bread-and-butter of *any one's* cutting. Besides, I've tried it, and they only afford salt butter. I can't stand that. So as I've got to eat it and no mistake, with all the house looking at me, I cut a slice when I'm having my own tea, at home, and bring it down with me."

Rather among the refreshments of the side-wings than of the stage must be counted that reeking tumbler of "very brown, very hot, and very strong brandy-and-water," which, as Doctor Doran relates, was prepared for poor Edmund Kean, as, towards the close of his career, he was wont to stagger from before the footlights, and, overcome by his exertions and infirmities, to sink, "a helpless, speechless, fainting, bent-up mass," into the chair placed in readiness to receive the shattered, ruined actor. With Kean's prototype in acting and in excess, George Frederick Cooke, it was less a question of stage or side-wing refreshments than of the measure of preliminary potation he had indulged in. In what state would he come down to the theatre? Upon the answer to that inquiry the entertainments of the night greatly depended. "I was drunk the night before last," Cooke said on one occasion; "still I acted, and they hissed me. Last night I was drunk again, and I didn't act, they hissed all the same. There's no knowing how to please the public." A fine actor, Cooke was also a genuine humorist, and it must be said for him, although a like excuse has been perhaps too often pleaded for such failings as his, that his senses gave way, and his brain became affected after very slight indulgence. From this, however, he could not be persuaded to abstain, and so made havoc of his genius, and terminated, prematurely and ignobly enough, his professional career.

Many stories are extant as to performances being interrupted by the entry of innocent messengers bringing to the players, in the presence of the audience, refreshments they had designed to consume behind the scenes, or sheltered from observation between the wings. Thus it is told of one Walls, who was the prompter in a Scottish theatre, and occasionally appeared in minor parts, that he once directed a maid-of-all-work, employed in the wardrobe department of the theatre, to bring him a gill of whisky. The night was wet, so the girl, not caring to go out, intrusted the commission to a little boy who happened to be standing by. The play was Othello, and Walls played the Duke. The scene of the senate was in course of representation. Brabantio had just stated:

> My particular grief
> Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature,
> That it engluts and swallows other sorrows,
> And it is still itself,

and the Duke, obedient to his cue, had inquired:

Why, what's the matter?

when the little boy appeared upon the stage, bearing a pewter measure, and explained, "It's just the whisky, Mr. Walls; and I could na git ony at fourpence, so yer awn the landlord a penny; and he says it's time you was payin' what's doon i' the book." The senate broke up amidst the uproarious laughter of the audience.

Real macaroni in Masaniello, and real champagne in Don Giovanni, in order that Leporello may have opportunities for "comic business" in the supper scene, are demanded by the customs of the operatic stage. Realism generally, indeed, is greatly affected in the modern theatre. The audiences of to-day require not merely that real water shall be seen to flow from a pump, or to form a cataract, but that real wine shall proceed from real bottles, and be fairly swallowed by the performers. In Paris, a complaint was recently made that, in a scene representing an entertainment in modern fashionable society, the champagne supplied was only of a second-rate quality. Through powerful opera-glasses the bottle labels could be read, and the management's sacrifice of truthfulness to economy was severely criticised. The audience resented the introduction of the cheaper liquor, as though they had themselves been constrained to drink it.

As part also of the modern regard for realism may be noted the "cooking-scenes," which have frequently figured in recent plays. The old conjuring trick of making a pudding in a hat never won more admiration than is now obtained by such simple expedients as frying bacon or sausages, or broiling chops or steaks upon the stage in sight of the audience. The manufacture of paste for puddings or pies by one of the dramatis personæ has also been very favourably received, and the first glimpse of the real rolling-pin and the real flour to be thus employed, has always been attended with applause. In a late production, the opening of a soda-water bottle by one of the characters was generally regarded as quite the most impressive effect of the representation.

At Christmas time, when the shops are so copiously supplied with articles of food as to suggest a notion that the world is content to live upon half-rations at other seasons of the year, there is extraordinary storing of provisions at certain of the theatres. These are not edible, however; they are due to the art of the property-maker, and are designed for what are known as the "spill and pelt" scenes of the pantomime. They represent juicy legs of mutton, brightly streaked with red and white, quartern loaves, trussed fowls, turnips, carrots, and cabbages, strings of sausages, fish of all kinds, sizes, and colours; they are to be stolen and pocketed by the clown, recaptured by the policeman, and afterwards wildly whirled in all directions in a general "rally" of all the characters in the harlequinade. They are but adroitly painted canvas stuffed with straw or sawdust. No doubt the property-maker sometimes views from the wings with considerable dismay the severe usage to which his works of art are subjected. "He's an excellent clown, sir," one such was once heard to say, regarding from his own stand-point the performance of the jester in question. "He don't destroy the properties as some do." Perhaps now and then, too, a minor actor or a supernumerary, who has derided "the sham wine parties of Macbeth and others," may lament the scandalous waste of seeming good victuals in a pantomime. But, as a rule, these performers are not fanciful on this, or, indeed, on any other subject. They are not to be deceived by the illusions of the stage; they are themselves too much a part of its shams and artifices. Property legs of mutton are to them not even food for reflection, but simply "properties," and nothing more. Otherwise, a somewhat too cynical disposition might be unfortunately encouraged; and the poor player, whose part requires him to be lavish of bank-notes of enormous amount upon the stage, and the hungry "super," constrained to maltreat articles of food which he would prize dearly if they were but real, might be too bitterly affected by noting the grievous discrepancy existing between their private and their public careers—the men they are and the characters they seem to be.

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER VIII. COMBINATION AND CONSPIRACY.

Mrs. Entwistle lying on her sofa, which—there being no longer anything worth looking out at—had been moved away from the window and wheeled opposite the fire, was gazing into the glowing coals, and seeing in them dreary scenes, which harmonised with the gloomy state of her mental reflection, for Mrs. Entwistle was

in a very low condition of mind and body. Her maid Willis, whose life was rendered a burden to her by the perpetual and always contradictory orders which she was receiving from the invalid, could have vouched for this; and so could Doctor Asprey, who was in such constant request, and had his valuable time so much intruded upon by his eccentric patient, that he was compelled to speak out frankly, and to come to an understanding with her.

"Your guineas, my dear Mrs. Entwistle," said the great physician, blandly, "are as good to me as any one else's, and if I thought I earned them honestly I should not have the smallest scruple in taking them. Further, I am bound to say that were I, as I was some years ago, a struggling man, to whom fees are an object, my scruples would trouble me infinitely less than they do now. But the fact is, there is a large number of persons anxious for my advice, to whom I can be of real service, while to you I can do no possible good. Your bodily health is certainly no worse than it was previous to your last attack, no worse, that is to say, in itself. If you suffer yourself to be preyed upon by any mental disquietude, you at once put yourself out of the range of my art. I cannot minister to a mind diseased, my dear Mrs. Entwistle, nor should I presume to suggest to you where you would most probably receive the necessary consolation."

"Thanks, doctor, for your reticence," said Mrs. Entwistle, with a faint smile. "A man of less savoir faire would certainly have recommended me to apply to the incumbent of the parish. However, my mental disquietude, as you term it, is not of any great moment, and I will take care not to pester you causelessly any more."

In declaring that the trouble which preyed upon her mind was of no great moment, Mrs. Entwistle scarcely spoke the truth. Ever since she had revealed to Gerald the history of her early days, and of the manner in which, for the sake of gratifying her own longings for vengeance, she had practised upon his father's jealousy, the aspect of life had changed to her. Other persons would have found such a life passed on an invalid's sofa, whence, as she knew well, she would never be carried but to her grave, sufficiently blank and colourless. But from the day on which Gerald Hardinge first took up his abode with her, to that on which she saw the tear steal down his face, as he listened to the story of his mother's wrongs, the woman, whom all the world looked upon with pity, and half her little world regarded with contempt, had enjoyed a wealth of quiet happiness, such as was granted but to few of her friends.

From the day she told her story, Gerald's manner had altered towards her. He was not less affectionate; on the contrary, whenever he was with her she could see that he strove to pay her constant attention, and to be specially loving, both in language and manner, whenever he addressed her. But the young man was changed, changed in every way, and, as Mrs. Entwistle thought, very much for the worse. The society into which she had introduced him, and in which he had taken such delight, had no longer any charm for him. Formerly his absences from home were comparatively rare, and on his return he would generally bring with him some anecdote of the company in which his time had been passed; now he was away constantly from morning till night, and, as regarded most of his actions, was silent as the grave.

There was one subject, however, on which Gerald had spoken to his aunt, and spoken frankly. That girl, whose acquaintance he had made when he was amongst those theatrical people, and whom he had met in London on her way to some low employment which she had—he had spoken about her. When he first mentioned his accident of encountering with Rose in the street, narrating at the same time how he had known her as a child, and given her drawing-lessons at Wexeter, Mrs. Entwistle gave no hint of objection to his renewal of the acquaintance, but, on the contrary, expressed a wish that Rose should be brought to call upon her, and patronised her, as we have seen. After she had received a visit from the young girl, and noticed her rare and delicate beauty, her simple self-possession, and the general air of refinement and high breeding which characterised her, more especially after she had marked the effect which these charms had unmistakably produced upon Gerald, it occurred to Mrs. Entwistle that certain relations might eventually arise between the young people, of which she would be supposed to be in ignorance, but which would necessarily prevent her from receiving Miss Pierrepoint in her house. Mrs. Entwistle was a woman of the world, and of that world which now-a-day is not reticent in its remarks about matters which our ancestors discreetly ignored; so she took an opportunity of mentioning what

she had in her mind to Gerald, and received a reply which, both in words and meaning, was stronger and sterner than anything which she had yet heard from his lips. Mrs. Entwistle shrugged her shoulders; her nephew was a purist, she supposed, and the young men of the present day, if he were to be taken as an example, were notably different from those of her time. His friendship with this young girl was, she supposed, one of those queer fancies which were part and parcel of his artistic nature. It never occurred to her for one moment that George Heriot, no longer an outcast, but, though not yet restored to his position and his name, yet well placed before the world as her adopted heir, could ever intend to offer marriage to Rose Pierrepoint, an unknown person, who earned her living by her own labour, and when Gerald announced to her that he had proposed, and been accepted by this same "young person," and was only awaiting the result of his interview with his father to carry the project into execution, Mrs. Entwistle was furious. It is probable that in her rage she might have ordered her nephew to quit the house, had not Gerald in the same speech announced to her, with all expressions of gratitude for her past kindness, his intention of being solely self-reliant for the future, and of seeking his fortune in a foreign country. Then her love for the boy, which had been growing up for the last few years, increasing year by year as his manhood developed, asserted itself with fullest force, and in the bitterness of her despair at the idea of parting from him, the proud woman humbled herself to pour forth a plaint which no one could have listened to unmoved. Why should his marriage, which ought to be a joy to them both, prove a source of sorrow to her? What necessity was there for him to go away? Could he not bring his wife to that house, which for years he had looked upon as his home, where she should be received as a daughter, and of which she should be made the mistress? Ah, would he not wait by her a very, very little time longer, until—until—and then her voice broke, and Gerald, profoundly touched, whispered that her wishes should be obeyed.

But when this excited emotion, which lasted for a very short period with Mrs. Entwistle, had passed away, she found herself not one whit more inclined to approve of what she held to be her nephew's intention of mésalliance, not one atom better disposed towards the person of his choice. She felt herself in duty bound to request Gerald to bring Rose constantly to her house, by which means she herself saw far more of her nephew than she otherwise would have done. For the love-making between Gerald and Rose at this period of their career was by no means so offensive as such proceedings are generally supposed to be; and their meetings were usually held in Mrs. Entwistle's boudoir, where they sat by the side of the invalid's sofa. Mrs. Entwistle had bitterly opposed Gerald's plan for going down to Springside, and acquainting his father with the details of the story which she had told him, not merely because it would incense Sir Geoffry against her and place her character in a most disadvantageous light—as for that she cared nothing—but the result of the interview, whatever it might be, might have the effect of hastening Gerald's marriage. For if Sir Geoffry, believing what was told him, and repenting of his former rigorous conduct, clasped his son to his heart and reinstated him in his position, he would be too glad in the excess of his joy to agree to anything his son wished, and to accept as daughter-in-law no matter who might be proposed. While, on the other hand, should the attempt at reconciliation prove a failure, there was the chance that Gerald in his fury would instantly ally Rose's fate with his own, and forgetful of the promise which he had made to remain with his aunt until her death, would start off with his wife to seek their fortune in a new land. And although her fears had not been verified, Mrs. Entwistle was still not without alarm. She had seen how much Gerald had taken to heart the rebuff and the insult he had received. She had noticed—she could not help noticing and grieving over—the change in his appearance and manner, the loss of the fire and energy which formerly characterised his every thought and movement, the dull, moody, brooding state into which he had fallen, and from which even Rose's companionship sometimes failed to rouse him. He had told her—for in all his communications with her Gerald was consistently frank—that his one great aim in life was to be reconciled to his father, that he had told Rose as much, and that she had given him fresh hope. It appeared that Rose—how, or through whom, she would not say—had the means of bringing certain influence to bear upon Sir Geoffry Heriot, and this influence was to be strongly exercised in Gerald's favour.

Mrs. Entwistle, being really in her heart extremely doubtful of the existence of any such power as that described by her nephew, at first endeavoured to inveigle Rose into a discussion in which a judicious series of cross-questioning might either have exposed the pretence, or elicited from her the source and means of her influence with Sir Geoffry. Finding this to be a total failure, and utterly discomfited by the quiet manner in which the girl parried all her attacks, Mrs. Entwistle was reduced to uttering small scraps of sarcastic doubt, and even of these she was compelled to be chary in her nephew's presence.

See her now, stretched out on the sofa, her head thrown back, her thin hand, still clasping the light fire-screen, fallen passively by her side. Doctor Asprey may be right; that dull, dead, white complexion, those hollow cheeks, those puckered lips, may belong to what has become her normal state, but it is a grewsome aspect nevertheless, and one suggestive of dire illness, if not of immediately impending dissolution, to the uninitiated beholder.

A light firm step in the passage outside, and hearing it the invalid at once changes her attitude, manages by an effort to prop herself into a less recumbent position, and takes up a book which she had let fall by her side on the sofa. A vain pretence this, as she recognises immediately by putting it back again, the dusk having supervened since she fell into her reverie, and there being no longer daylight sufficient to read by. Onward comes the footstep, and her brow grows more stern. Her eyes are closed when the door opens, remain closed until the incoming figure, Rose Pierrepoint, dressed in a neat hat and veil, with a long dark cloak, is standing beside her.

Then she opens them wearily, says wearily, "It is you—Rose?" with a marked hesitation before the utterance of the christian name.

"It is I, Mrs. Entwistle! I feared to disturb you, as I thought you were asleep."

"No, I read until I could see no longer, and then I closed my eyes, principally, I fancy, to keep myself from glaring into the fire and seeing uncomfortable visions there. You have brought Gerald with you?"

"No, I thought to find him here."

"Have you any news for him?" asked the invalid, suddenly turning her face towards her companion.

"None at all," said the young girl, shaking her head sadly.

"Then your mysterious influence, the secret of which you guard so jealously, has not yet been able to prevail upon Sir Geoffry to grant his son that interview upon which Gerald counts so much?"

"No, it has not."

"'It,'" repeated Mrs. Entwistle, with a sarcastic inflection of her voice. "Your prudence, especially for so young a person, is quite wonderful. By saying 'it,' you commit neither yourself nor any one else. If any other man than Geoffry Heriot had been in question, I would have wagered you had said 'she.'"

"I am forbidden to state the means by which I am in hopes of winning Sir Geoffry to our side, and as you are aware, Mrs. Entwistle, Gerald, who is equally ignorant as everybody else about them, absolves me from telling him.

"I am aware of that, Rose," said Mrs. Entwistle, with a repetition of her former hesitation, "and I am sure I do not desire to press you upon the subject. It will be sufficient for us to know the name of our benefactor when—well, when we have derived any benefit from it."

At this juncture Gerald entered the room, and after bending over his aunt's sofa, and greeting Rose, he threw himself into a chair, and sat with his hands plunged into his pockets, silent and moody, waiting to be spoken to, so unlike the Gerald Hardinge of a few months previous.

"It is useless to ask you whether you have any news, Gerald, I suppose?" said Mrs. Entwistle.

"None at all," he replied. "No news now would have any interest to me, unless it came through Rose here, and I know she has none, or she would have rushed at me with it directly she came in."

"You judge rightly, Gerald," said Rose. "I have heard nothing—nothing at all."

"Our dear Rose's oracle takes a long time for deliberation," said Mrs. Entwistle, clipping out the words between her lips. "Let us trust that when it is induced to speak its utterances may be favourable."

"Whether it speaks or not, matters very little to me now," said Gerald. "Not, dear one," he added, extending his hand to Rose, "that I mean to be in the least degree unkind to you. I know all that you have done has been for the best, and in the belief that you would be able to carry out all you hoped. But I find I cannot exist under this mental pressure any longer, and I fear, unless some result, no matter whether favourable or unfavourable, be speedily arrived at, my mind will give way.

There is no torture, to me, at least, to equal this agony of suspense."

"What do you propose to do, then?" asked Mrs. Entwistle, anxiously.

"To make one more effort to see my father, and set myself right with him. If I succeed, my one aim in life will be accomplished; if I fail, I shall be able to settle myself down with the conviction that I, as a mortal, had done my best, and that the fates were against me."

"Will you not let me try once more to see whether I cannot help you?" said Rose; "I am sure that——"

"I am sure that you have done all you can, my dear child, and that any further attempt would be useless. Indeed, I would rather come upon my father, taking him as unprepared even as I did last time, than that he should imagine I was currying favour with his friends to influence him in my behalf."

"If you would take the advice of one who has seen much more of the world than you, and who knows the tempers of men in general, and of Geoffry Heriot in particular," said Mrs. Entwistle, "you will think twice before you act on that determination. So far as you are aware, nothing has transpired since your previous visit to your father to warrant you in anticipating any better reception than you then experienced. We, who are devoted to you, Rose and I, can judge of the effect which that former visit had upon you. You cannot yourself pretend to be ignorant of, you cannot pretend to deny, that since then you are a completely changed man, and you owe it as much to us as well as to yourself, to think over and weigh well what might be the result of a repetition of such insults."

While she was speaking these words, Mrs. Entwistle managed to raise herself upon her elbow, and emphasised her speech with telling gesture. Her cheeks were flushed, and her voice rang out in tones such as Gerald had never heard it utter. When, as she ceased speaking, she fell back faint with the exertion, Gerald rose from his chair, and quickly crossing the room, caught her in his arms and pressed his lips upon her forehead.

"I should be base, indeed," he said, "if I did not recognise and appreciate the loving kindness which not merely prompts those words, but which has watched over and nurtured me so long. But I have thought over all you have just desired me to reflect upon; I have pictured to myself the scene which you have raised up before me; and I still think it right to go through with the task which I have set myself, and to attempt at least to perform what I still conceive to be my duty. If I fail, we three shall not be the less strongly knit together. If I succeed——"

"If you succeed, you will regain your father's love, but you will not permit him, however much cause he may have, to teach you to hate me," said Mrs. Entwistle in a broken voice. "You will have to bear with me for such a very little time."

"I am not likely to forget," said Gerald, kissing her cheek, "that when I was forsaken by him, you proved my friend."

"When do you intend going to Springside, Gerald?" asked Rose.

"If your friend is not able to gain me an interview this week, which I fear there is now little chance, I shall certainly go on Monday next."

"Monday next," repeated Rose to herself; "that would give me plenty of time to write again to Madge, if she felt that her intercession could now do us any good."

Just about the time that Gerald Hardinge announced his determination to his two companions, Mr. Philip Vane rang at the outer door of the house in Piccadilly, in which Mr. Delabole's chambers were situate. Admitted by the hall-porter, who rang a bell on hearing for whom inquiry was made, Mr. Vane ascended to the first floor, where he was received by Fritz, and informed that Mr. Delabole expected him. The valet added that his master was dressing for dinner, but that he had given orders to be told of Mr. Vane's arrival.

Indeed, Philip Vane had scarcely seated himself in an easy-chair, and taken up the evening paper, in which he turned by force of habit to the money article (though he had come straight from the City, and was probably at least as well informed about what had been going on there as the writer), when Mr. Delabole's jolly voice was heard from the inner room; and Fritz having opened the door of communication, Philip passed through and found his friend in a gorgeous dressing-room, with his short black hair standing straight on end awaiting the attention of the valet.

"What a luxurious dog it is," said Philip Vane, sardonically, after he and his friend had exchanged greetings. "He is absolutely too rich and too idle to brush his own hair!"

"Not at all, dear boy, not at all," said

Mr. Delabole. "He is never too rich or too idle to comb anybody else's hair, if he thinks they want it done for them, and to use a particularly small-toothed rasper for the occasion. As for his own hair, the manliness of his figure is so much developed, that he finds he cannot get conveniently at the back of his head, and is obliged to call in artificial aid."

"You sent me a line to the City, saying you wished to see me here. I presume you have something of more importance than your hair to talk to me about?"

"My hair is of the utmost importance to me, my dear Philip," said Mr. Delabole, placidly, "but I do not expect you to take equal interest in it. That will do, Fritz; if you will put out the rest of the things I shall not want you any more. Now," he continued, when the valet had left the room, "I can tell you what I wanted to see you about, as it is not my habit to chatter before servants. You recollect the conversation we had at the office immediately after my return from my little country trip?"

"I am not likely to forget it," said Philip Vane.

"You will recollect my mentioning to you the necessity of our getting Mr. Irving to join us, and the impossibility of our doing so unless he saw his friend Sir Geoffry Heriot's signature to our registered memorandum of association?"

"I recollect it perfectly."

"That signature is not yet there, I think," said Mr. Delabole, pausing in the act of tying his cravat, and looking round at his friend.

"See here, Delabole," said Philip Vane, under his breath. "Do you know what you are asking me to do?"

"To help yourself to a handsome wife with sixty thousand pounds. Nothing further that I know of."

"You have a hold over me in that matter, and you know it," said Vane, "but be careful how you——"

"Doctor Asprey is at the door," said Fritz. "Will you see him?"

"By all means," said Mr. Delabole. "Show him up." Then turning to Vane, he said, "Mind you sit him out. This matter must be decided to-night. Well, doctor, how are you, and where do you bring all that dust from?"

"From the Great Western Railway generally," said Doctor Asprey, who looked tired and travel-stained: "I just looked in on my way home from the station to see if you were going to dine at the half-yearly audit of the Friendly Grasp to-morrow?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Delabole. "We shall meet there. But where have you come from?"

"From Springside. My old fellow-student, Chenoweth, who was with me at St. Vitus, and is now in leading practice at Springside, telegraphed to me for a consultation, and I went down yesterday."

"Who is your patient, doctor?"

"An old Indian officer, a certain Sir Geoffry Heriot. A man of mark in his time, I believe, though his time is nearly over now."

"You consider it a bad case, then?"

"Couldn't well be worse. Cannot possibly live more than a few days—heart disease and other complications. Well, I must be going; we shall meet to-morrow. Good-night, Mr. Vane." And the doctor took his departure.

"You heard what he said," said Delabole, as soon as the door had closed; "the old man cannot live. This reduces the risk to nil. The signature would be supposed to have been obtained while we were at Springside. Luckily there was no lawyer, nor any one else in Sir Geoffry's confidence. Do you see your way to it now?"

"Certainly more clearly than I did," said Philip Vane, in a firm voice.

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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XIV. PAUL IS A COWARD.

WHEN the pedlar fled from Tobereevil he struck off across an outskirt of the woods, and got up among the hills. When he had walked for half an hour, and while the sun was still red in the sky, he reached a purple terrace of the mountain on which lay a lonely lake. Here he flung himself down to draw breath, and to gaze backward upon the lower world. He leaned over the edge of the lake to drink from his hand, and started as his own face met his eyes looking at him from the placid water.

"What nonsense this is!" he said, and immediately began pulling off his shock of black hair, his large bushy beard, and his heavy dark eyebrows. He dipped his face and head in the water, and rubbed both severely with a large pocket-handkerchief. After which divestment and ablution the pedlar had disappeared, and a gentleman had taken his place.

This gentleman had light brown hair and moustache, with very dark eyes and skin. His nose was large, his forehead broad, and with already some nervous lines upon it; his mouth sensitive, but firm. It was a face that was sure to be called handsome, because noble and pleasing; yet if this were manly beauty, it was that of the boldest and least regular type.

For a few minutes he looked pale and languid, like one who had undergone great fatigue or mental trouble; but by-and-bye he started up, muttering:

"I am Paul Finiston, and I had a right to come here. And I go away without harming any one."

And as if reassured by this declaration his face brightened, and he set off to ascend the mountain sturdily.

Paul Finiston had come a long way across the world, attracted by his uncle's advertisement. It had found him settled down in a distant country, with employment in his hands, and a good prospect for life before him. An old friend of his father had met with him, taken him into his business, promised him a partnership. Paul had thankfully accepted the good luck thrust in his way, had applied himself to work, and had striven to forget home in the excitement of making a fortune. It was a dream of his to forget that he was a Finiston of Tobereevil, to acquire the means of livelihood by labour of his own, and this done to go home in search of something he had left behind, and could not manage to do all his life without. How diligently he had worked, and with what fair hopes, and how meanwhile he had been teased and haunted, it is better to let him tell with his own lips by-and-bye. That he was a wayward, fanciful, and passionate nature, certain rough notes in a little pocket-book could tell. It might also be gathered from these jottings that there was a sort of woman-like twist about his heart and brains in spite of his masculine energy and bearing; something which made him illogical, tender, and uncertain in his moods. With a little more generosity, Nature had made him a poet; with a little less, a more contented man.

The advertisement had found him pursuing his way steadily. It had shaken his purpose with a great shock, and had brought him face to face with the longings which had been tempting him to give up his projected exile of years. Here was a good reason for going home at once. His uncle,

who was so rich, and whose heir he must be, desired his return without a moment's delay. Even Paul's matter-of-fact employer had looked upon his obedience as a thing of course. "There is no doubt at all," he had said, regretfully, "that a bird in the hand is worth a good many in the bush. A fortune in prospect and in exile is pretty good, but a fortune at home and ready made is better." So Paul had come home; not dragged by a love of gain, but by a hungry heart.

By the time he had landed in Ireland, however, the idea of presenting himself to the miser of Tobereevil had grown so repulsive to his mind, that he had almost stepped from one ship to another, and fled back whence he came. And only that that hunger of the heart was unappeased within him, his employer must have received him back ere he had ceased to be missed.

It was in the midst of a confusion of attraction and repulsion which seized on him when he thought of the land of his inheritance, that he gave way to that freak of jealous, inquisitive humour, which brought a pedlar over the mountains to the gate of Monasterlea. He would see these women, and he would know if they remembered him. May might be married; he would hear all about it. May might be cold, unamiable, and forgetful. He would see it at a glance. And if either of these speculations proved the right one, then he would go back unknown to the other side of the world. In that case he would not trust himself to the tortures of Tobereevil. The miser might have his gold all buried in his coffin if he pleased. He might will his estate to be kept as a vast burial-ground for his remains, and the mansion of Tobereevil a monument over his bones. He, Paul Finiston, would at least be rid of haunting terrors and worrying superstitions for the remainder of his life. But if May should be found a maiden, still kind, still mindful, with still in her heart all that anxiety for his welfare which had been painted in her face on that morning when she had stretched out her hands to him from the quay, why then Paul would be a man, and brave the curse of Tobereevil.

Well, he had gone happy from Monasterlea. He had seen May tender, true, and worthy to be loved. He would shelter himself under her womanhood and defy the curse. His fears had become phantoms. His hopes had taken a lovely form of flesh and blood. He walked towards Tobereevil a royal pedlar, ready to bestow gifts on all whom he might meet. But the long, foul shadow of Tobereevil in the evening sun had been too much for Paul Finiston. The old superstition, the old unaccountable terror that had made him feel himself a murderer when he confronted the miser even in fancy, had fallen upon him with tenfold force, now that he had looked on him in the flesh. May and his good genius were forgotten. The spirit of evil had taken hold of him again. Let him fly from this blight, this temptation, this curse! Let him return to his honest work beyond the sea!

So having spent a little his passion in the wood and on the hills, and rested a while by the margin of the lake, he set off to cross the mountains on his way back to Australia.

Soon the heat of his eagerness to be gone had abated, and he paused as he went, to look behind and beneath him. The glow of the evening was still ruddy on the land. A golden film had blurred the line of meeting between sky and sea. Higher, long bars of weightier gold had shot from behind the hills, and laid themselves level along the west, as if barring the gate through which the sun had passed. The hills on the horizon had wrapped themselves in violet, and seemed to nestle close against the warmth of the sky. The midlandscape rose towards the light in every tint of yellow-green, and flame-colour, and tawny brown, and fell under the shadows, saddened with every hue of grey, and olive, and brown-purple. Here and there a lake or a fragment of a streamlet glanced upward, like a flame out of the depths of a hollow. Here and there a farm-house or a cabin stood wrapped in a luminous haze of its own smoke. And the woods curled out and wreathed themselves over all the foreground; one half amber and ruddy, fused in the burning glamour of the hour; the other buried under the sombre purple of their own dense shade.

The beauty of the country smote him, like a blow from a friend. All this might be his. All this barren, wasted loveliness might be nurtured into teeming strength. He might do it, with his strong will and arm, helped by the meaner but mightier power that lay rotting and rusting among guineas and title-deeds in the miser's safe. How strange it was that Heaven's work should be defaced by the wickedness of one lean dotard! How strange that Paul Finiston, who panted to give renewed life to a crowd of his fellow-

creatures, should have to fly from the fear of hurting an old man!

He went more slowly now, onward and upward, higher and higher into the upper mountains. The plovers cried, and whirred close to him as they descended to their nests among the heather. A few faint echoes came floating up from the valleys; too few and too faint to bring a throb of human life into the lonely stillness. Yet there, and quite suddenly, Paul came face to face with a fellow-creature.

It was Con the fool, and he was sitting on the heath, one leg gathered up in an attitude of pain, the other extended at full length; the foot quivering and swollen. He grasped the heather with both hands as he leaned on them. He made no complaint, but the tears rolled heavily from his round black eyes, and there was a tragic look upon his broad white face.

"Hallo!" cried Paul, "what's the matter, my good fellow?"

"Con's foot killed," answered the idiot. "Con walk no more. Con die too on the mountains."

"Die?" said Paul, "nothing of the kind. Come, now, where am I to carry you to?"

By this time he had seated the idiot on his back.

"Nan!" cried the idiot.

"Where am I to find Nan?" asked Paul, in a puzzle. He made two steps forward, but seemingly in the wrong direction; for the fool began to cry again.

"This way, then," said Paul, and took another course. The idiot laughed, and clapped him on the back.

How long he might have strayed over the hills, seeking the way to Con's friends by means of such signs, we need not guess. Chance sent a guide to his aid.

Coming up the hill he saw a figure, wending slowly, and with the help of a stick, up the slippery braes. It was a little woman dressed in a long grey cloak which had seen many winters, a scarlet handkerchief on her head, her face brown as a nut, and her hair lying like a white silk fringe along her wrinkled brow.

"God save yer honor!" cried she, cheerily. "Who'd think to meet a gintleman on the mountains—let alone wid a poor omadhaun on his back!"

"Are you Nan?" asked Paul.

"Nan? Ochone! is it Nan Kearney ye mane? Then it's fifty long years since I was the cut o' Nan Kearney!"

"I never saw Nan, and how am I to know?" said Paul. "I'm a stranger here, and I found this poor fellow lying hurt on the heath. He calls out for Nan."

"Nan and Bid!" cried Con, joyfully, and with a friendly gaze at the old woman.

"Oh, ay! thrust him for a fool but he knows his own frinds," said the new-comer. "I'm Bid, an' I know the way to Nan's: an' if it'd be a thing, young gintleman, that ye would carry him that far—why it's the Lord Himsel' that'll give ye a lift for it in yer need!"

Paul laughed, and forgot that he was the miser's heir, and strode on contentedly with the fool on his back, and the old woman for his guide. They struck out on a path which leaned slantwise through a pass between two peaks of a cloven hill. And following along this they heard a soft girlish voice saying, somewhere near:

"Come back, now, Patsie! Don't go down there or ould Simon'll catch ye!"

"Nan!" cried the fool in a tone of delight.

And then they turned the corner of a rock and came upon a rustic scene.

CHAPTER XV. BID AND THE HOUSE-MOTHER.

It was a scene like one of Mulready's pictures. Against the tall red sandstone cliff a cabin had been propped. It hung clinging to and slipping from this wall at its back, with its slanting thatch wreathed with moss and brilliant weeds, its gables awry, its windows one up and one down, its chimney crowned with an old upturned basket, its smoke hovering upward, its door low and dark, but gilt round with the sunglare like the gate of a royal palace. A slim young girl sat leaning against the wall, weaving a basket, with a pile of rods at her feet. She had a fair, ruddy look of innocence and health, short, saucy features, and large blue eyes. Her loose auburn locks hung in a heap of bronzed flakes upon her neck. The sun had browned her cheeks, her hands, and her naked feet, which were prettily crossed before her, where she sat. But her temples, and her throat, and her little ears were white. Two mahogany-coloured urchins with curly black hair were playing with the rods that lay beside her. Another, younger, swarthier, and sturdier, had wandered to a distance, and looked back over his shoulder with audacity in his arch black eyes. All these wild creatures were clothed in dark red flannel, the girl with a white kerchief across the bosom. In the doorway a woman was spinning wool. All round about them spread

the red and purple mountains with their rich tawny patches, where the grass and tender herbage had broken out through the heath. Below lay the sea, and in the distance the white gleam of a village on the coast. And over all, and through all, glowed that after-glare of the sunset, upon red cliffs, ripe cheeks, cabin, heath, and ocean.

The repose of this scene was disturbed by the new-comers. The girl sprang to her feet, spilling her rods; the children shrieked and clapped their hands in delight at seeing Con perched on another man's back; the spinning woman ran out from under the shadow of the doorway. There they were laughing, gesticulating, making themselves more picturesque at every turn, till they found that Con was hurt. Then there was a sudden hush, then little cries, and grieved faces, and the scene wore an air of vivid tragedy; till they found that he was not much injured after all. Then the laughter broke out again. The fool was placed reclining on a couch of dried heather, clapped on the shoulder, cheered, pitied, and purred over. Nan fetched a pitcher of water, and bathed and bandaged the hurt foot.

"Is he her brother?" asked Paul of the spinning woman, whom Bid had introduced as Mrs. Kearney, the house-mother of this homestead.

"Her brother, is it? No, no, he's no son o' mine. But sure if he isn't what's the differ? He comes an' he goes. We'd be lonesome an' quare without the fool. As for Nan, he's just like one o' the babbies till her. An' he'd kiss the groun' she walks!"

"See that now!" said Bid, striking in, "how fools does flourish! Gets purty girls to bathe their feet, an' gintlemen to carry them on their shouldhers."

"And kind-hearted women to lead them back to their friends when they are astray," said Paul, smiling.

"Och, och! sure I'm only a poor beggar!" said Bid, tossing her head sadly.

"Beggar!" said the house-mother, indignantly, as if an insult had been flung at her own head. "Thin, Bid, have sinse! Who calls her a beggar, I'd be glad to know, yer honor? If ye seen the purty house she had till Simon put his clutches on it an' threwn her out upon the road! An' if ye seen the fine man she had for a son, afore he died of the cold he caught in the snow that black night. Don't cry, Bid! Keep up yer heart, alanna! Sure I'm not goin' to let ye make little o' yersel' to sthrangers that might believe ye! Whiles ye pay us visits an' it rises our hearts to see ye, an' whiles ye stay away, an' we're lonesome till ye come roun'. That's the way it is wid her, yer honor, she lives among the people; but there's nobody in the whole counthry that would dar' call Bid a beggar but hersel'!"

"God love ye, Mary Kearney!" said Bid, drying her eyes and throwing up her head, "an' now I'll have my say. Ye hear that woman, yer honor," she said, addressing herself to Paul. "An' ye'd think maybe she was that well to live that she had nothing to do but hand away her creelfuls o' potatoes, an' her mugfuls o' male to every hungry mouth that comes lookin' a bit through the hills. An' ye don't know that her good man is dead, an' her hunted out o' the nate little houseen that he built wid his own hands. Ye don't know what a waste bitteen o' land this was whin she got it, an' how her an' her soft gossoons hammered it wid their spades till they dug the little fields up out o' the rock. An' maybe ye don't know, but she has ten childher till her share, an' nine o' them younger nor Nan; all like steps o' stairs. An' her spinnin', an' diggin', an' plantin', an' sewin', an' the agint holdin' a whip over her head all the time! Ye didn't know her afore, yer honor, but maybe ye'll know her now. Look at her there! Mary Kearney; that always has a corner for thim that's worse off nor hersel'!"

Bid gesticulated with her hand, as if she were denouncing Mary Kearney. She stopped, out of breath; and the two women looked away from each other, and cried in a sort of passion over each other's troubles; till Nan's clear voice came ringing between them, like the sound of a pleasant bell across the storm.

"Ye're all thankin' an' praisin' other," said she, blithely, "but here's a poor boy that wants to be praisin' somebody too. Con wants to thank the gintleman that carried him whin his foot wouldn't walk. May the Lord love yer honor an' lift ye clane over yer throubles, if ye have any!"

She had risen up from her position on her knees beside Con, and stood, comely and tender, looking from Con to Paul, and from Paul to Con. Paul left the other women to calm themselves, and came forward to offer his further goodwill to the fool.

"He's just like to love ye for it his whole life long!" said Nan. But as Paul drew

nearer to her Con's face changed. He threw one arm round Nan's little sunburnt feet, and waved Paul backward with the other.

"Don't mind him, yer honor," said Nan, smiling indulgently, and patting the fool's rough head with her hand. "There's whiles he's quare, an' ye'd think it's jealous he'd be," she said, blushing instantaneously all over her pretty ripe face, "an' then he don't like anybody to spake to me but hissel'. An' sure it's wicked to teaze the likes o' him; an' maybe dangersome as well."

Here Mrs. Kearney stepped forward, without her tears, and invited the young gentleman to join the frugal supper of her family. Bid and she had carried out a table from the cabin, on which they had placed a huge dish of fine new potatoes, some coarse earthen platters, and some salt. "Well would it plase us to offer betther to a gintleman an' a sthranger!" said Mrs. Kearney. Paul declared that nothing could be better. And then they all sat down together in the soft purple twilight; the heir of Tobereevil, the beggar, the fool, the house-mother, the pretty maiden, and a troop of hungry children.

By this time Paul was quite at home with the party. He humoured Con by taking no notice of Nan, and giving all his attention to the elder women. He had many questions to ask, not mere idle questions, but in search of information which he felt to concern himself. He had a friendly fellow-feeling for these simple mountaineers. They and he were suffering under the weight of a common curse.

"I'm a stranger, you know," said Paul, with a blush at his own cunning, "and I want to hear something about this Simon whom you talk about. Tell me about him."

The house-mother and Bid looked at one another, as if to say, "Where can we begin?"

"'Deed, sir," said Bid, "it's but fool's work to talk o' him. He's the scourge o' the counthry that has the curse o' him for a lan'lord. And if it wasn't that the people has some hopes o' thim that'll come afther him, it'd be well they were all dead an' in their graves."

This was the very point that Paul wished to arrive at. He wanted to hear from their own lips what they expected from the miser's heir.

"Who is to come after him?" he said.

"He's wan Paul Finiston," began Bid.

"A bad name!" groaned the house-mother.

"Whist wid yer nonsense!" cried the beggar woman; "sure the heart o' a man isn't in his name! He's a young man, yer honor, an' they say he's good, an' some day he'll be comin' here wid the mercy o' God in his two han's for the poor."

"How do you know that?" asked Paul.

"We're prayin' for it," said Bid, pathetically, "an' we've prayed for it long. It won't give me back what I have lost when it comes, but whiniver I look at one o' Mary's gossoons sittin' there I think he'll live to see the good times!"

"Why don't he come home at once?" cried the house-mother, passionately. "Why couldn't he come wid even a promise that'd keep us alive? What is it that makes quality so hard, I wondher? There's nobody comes here but only to tant us, an' crass us. The last that come here he was a rale fine gintleman, an' he was shootin' for his pleasure over the mountains. An' I lighted his—that thing that the quality smokes instead o' a pipe—I lighted it for him, an' he sat down there fornent me, an' he tould me the Irish was a lazy people, an' axed me why didn't I work. An' he faulted the ould basket up on the chimley; sure it was the best that Nan could do for it! and he faulted the stuffin' I had put in a windahole to keep out the cruel blast. I could ha' tould him that I loved a bit o' glass as well as he did, an' that I had wanst a purty houseen wid windas as bright as diamonds. But I sickened ower it someways an' I hadn't a word to say. I couldn't give him an answer. I just turned on my heel an' went in an' shut my door."

"Ay, ay!" said Bid, soothingly, "we know the cut o' him. But this gintleman's none o' that sort."

"I ax his pardon," said Mary Kearney, humbly, "for maybe he'd think I evened it till him. But we know he's none o' that sort."

"And what if this Paul Finiston should turn out to be one o' that sort?" asked Paul.

The woman turned a startled glance upon him, and then cast a look of anguish on her children.

"Why, thin, if he do, sir," she said, sighing, "thin the best frind that we had'd be somebody that'd take us out, wan by wan, an' shoot us down wid a gun!"

"Heaven forbid!" said Paul, hastily, then added, "I suppose he keeps away in disgust at the whole thing."

"Oh, yer honor," said Nan, speaking up in her fresh voice, "if the Lord had kep' away in disgust from all sinners, what'd ha' become of the world?"

"Nan, Nan!" said her mother, quickly, "yer tongue's too free."

"She's right," said Paul, "and I think if he believed he could be of use that Paul Finiston would come here."

"Do ye know him? Are ye his frind?" cried three voices together.

"I know something of him," said Paul.

"You do?" cried Bid. "Oh, thin, I'll make bould to send a word till him, if yer honor'll take the charge o't."

"Willingly," said Paul; "I promise he shall surely hear your message."

"First tell him to come, for the love o' God an' the poor. It would rise cratures' hearts to hear a bit o' a promise from him, an' he might stop some harm, an' do many's the good turn. An' thin if that doesn't touch, just tell him that if he doesn't come soon there'll be a poor fool body put stannin' in his shoes!"

"How?" asked Paul. "Who is that?"

"Yondher!" said Bid, pointing to Con, who had fallen sound asleep on the heather at Nan's feet.

"Tell me what you mean," said Paul.

"There's wan Tibbie, an' she calls hersel' Misther Finiston's housekeeper, an' she lives there an' houlds the grip o' him. An' she says she's Con's aunt. An' she gives out that her sisther, Con's mother, was married on Simon's brother, an' she calls Con the heir o' Tobereevil. An' there's a lawyer comes here, the agint—may the curse o' the counthry——"

"Stop, Bid!" cried the house-mother.

"Ay, sure!" said Bid. "I needn't sin my soul on him; God forgive him, an' me!"

"Go on, please," said Paul.

"Well, this lawyer knows the way o' makin' wills, an' some fine mornin' Simon'll die, lavin' all he has to Con. And Tibbie and the lawyer'll have Tobereevil betune them. What would Paul Finiston say to that, yer honor?"

Paul had turned pale. "I think," said he, "that if he wouldn't come for the first part of your message he would not for the second."

"But don't ye see it's the same thing?" cried the house-mother, passionately. "Oh Lord! What way will it be wid the people in this counthry at all?"

"I did not say he would not come," said Paul, gently.

It was now dark, with that clear darkness of the mountain world on a summer's night. The moon came floating up from the lower world, swimming in faint gold through the black-purple atmosphere. The party broke up, and the various figures moved about like pleasant shadows in the luminous twilight. The fire-light began to glow through the cabin doorway. Counsels were being held about the housing of the stranger, the guest of the night. The women spread new straw in an out-house, where they all meant to sleep, leaving the cabin to his honor. Paul frustrated their intentions, however, by taking possession of the out-house, with Con for a companion. Soon all was silent on the mountain-side. Paul slept soundly on his bed of straw. Once during the night he awoke. Through a breach in the wall he could see the moon still hovering over the hills. In her wake he saw a face floating; May's face, with that look which it had worn as she clasped her black cross.

"What a coward I have been!" he said.

A CUBAN WEDDING.

I PACE, like a sentinel on guard, the spacious market-place which stands more than forty feet above the hilly streets of a Cuban town. Occasionally I pause to lean over the iron rail which encloses the market, and to contemplate a certain single-storied habitation beneath me. A covered balcony, as roomy as a small chamber, stands before the blue and white painted house; the windows and door of which are so lofty and wide that the interior of the dwelling being brilliantly illuminated with gas, I can see into every apartment which faces the street. A couple of ladies, attired in light muslin, are swaying and fanning themselves in cane rocking-chairs, and are apparently entertaining, or being entertained by, two gentlemen visitors who are seated before them, also in rocking-chairs, and with fans and cigarettes in their hands. Anon a third gentleman and then a fourth, both attired in spotless white drill starched to the stiffness of cardboard, step into the balcony from the street, enter by the open door, and without a word occupy two of the twelve rocking-chairs, which are arranged in rows in the centre of the apartment, like seats in a railway carriage. The conversation does not seem very animated; but it is varied by the younger lady, who presently rises in the most languid manner

possible, and crawling towards a grand piano, placed on glass pedestals as a non-conductor of moisture from the brick floor, proceeds to play a Danza Criolla. When she has finished her performance, and a little more conversation, or Tertulia as it is called, has been disposed of, the visitors rise in military fashion, and saluting the ladies withdraw, and betake themselves to a neighbouring house, where the same formalities belonging to an evening visit in Cuba are observed.

Still reclining upon my iron support, I watch my señoras in muslin as they issue forth upon the wide balcony. One of them, a stout old lady with a plump, good-natured face, summons one of her black domestics, who presently appears with a couple of rocking-chairs, which he leaves on the balcony. It is a sultry evening (though the month is January), and the night air is inviting.

I am intimately acquainted with the ladies before me, and in one of them I am deeply interested, for her name is Cachita, and she is fresh from a certain convent where she has been incarcerated six months for making love without her father's approval.* That gentleman has lately departed for North America, in order to recruit his health, which had been greatly shattered by an accident which he met with while inspecting some machinery in use at his sugar estate. It is considered a great event when a Cuban leaves his island for a foreign country, and until news of his safe arrival reaches his friends at home, his absence is deplored, as though he had left both the old world as well as the new. In consideration of this, together with the fact that my inamorata has by her father's grace been restored to her home and family, it is scarcely befitting, as Cuban customs go, that her lover should renew thus early his visits at her parental roof. So, until assured that my reappearance will not be thought ill-timed, I prudently retire. But the scene of my retirement is at present far from remote, and from it I now take a very pardonable survey of my prospects.

Cachita and her amiable mother are airing a subject which deeply concerns my happiness, so I may be excused if in the stillness of the night I pause to overhear their dialogue. That portion of it which interests me most is when the older lady observes:

"Your father is stubborn and unreasonable, and deserves any disappointment which may await him. Besides, you have been severely and unjustly punished for no fault that I can see. And now if happiness is in store for you, it will be only a well-earned reward for much patience and suffering."

"Ay! madre mia," sighs the younger lady, "then you find nothing to prevent our speedy union?"

"Nothing. And as for means, why your father owes his position and fortune to his alliance with me, and although he has the disposal and management of the sugar estate, I have still a private purse of my own out of which I will assist you both if Gualterito has not sufficient."

"Papacito pretended to object to him on the grounds of his respectability and honour, but now we have received from his country and his friends here ample testimony on those points, and also on that which you, mamá mia, prize more than all."

"Yes, Gualterito is a genuine white, which, in this country of doubtful colour, is, you know, a great recommendation. Your own father's mother was anything but——"

"No importa, mamacita; I am going to wed now after your own heart."

"Your father would have you married to young Amador, about whose dark origin there is very little doubt. But then Don Catasús, his parent, is a rich old coffee-planter, and that is enough for Don Severiano."

Cachita gazes upwards into the obscurity of the market-place, from whence in happier times she has often looked for me to emerge.

"I think some one is standing there," she observes.

"Perhaps it is your lover, who is punctilious about visiting us until he is assured of my hearty welcome."

I cough twice.

"Somebody is there, sure enough," says Cachita. "May I send Gumersinda, the negress, with a message, mamacita?"

Doña Belen gives her consent, and then signifying her intention to retire for the night, bids her daughter follow her in half an hour.

Soon the pattering of naked feet ascending the stone steps which lead to the market, announces the approach of Gumersinda. That faithful vassal comes with an invitation for me from her fair mistress,

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. vii., p. 33.

and I am not long in obeying her summons.

We meet. We embrace; and though we have much to tell since our separation, some time elapses ere we can give expression to our sentiments. When we have become sufficiently accustomed to one another's society, we calmly discuss our pending marriage. Mamma has given her consent, papa is away, and we are to be shortly united with all the ceremony attending a Cuban wedding.

Some weeks pass, however, before that happy event can be celebrated. My creed differs somewhat from that of my intended, and I have to submit to certain formalities required by the Catholic priest who is to marry us; the most important of these being the production of a certificate proving my birth, parentage, and origin. We must wait until this can be procured from my native country, and, meanwhile, other obstacles to our union are surmounted. Foremost among these is the question of my confession. Cachita confesses; and that is nothing new to her; but I cannot be induced to follow her example. Not that I have anything to confess about which I need be ashamed; but I withdraw from this obligation on principle. Besides, I have authority for my objection in certain British subjects who have wedded in Cuba under similar circumstances to my own. Prompted by Her Majesty's British consul, and a native lawyer, I gain my point.

In my new capacity of accepted lover I am bound to submit to many hardships. I may not meet my intended alone under any circumstances, and I am privileged to enjoy her society only in the presence of the numerous relatives and friends, who visit her at all hours of the day and evening. Then I am expected to return these same visits in company with my future bride and her nearest relatives. In short, the long period of my courtship is made so irksome that I would gladly relinquish two years of my married life for half an hour of the old secret love-making at Cachita's grated window.

The wearisome ordeal at length comes to an end—the nuptial day arrives. The ceremony, such as it is, takes place very late in the night; indeed, it is early morning before I and my male friends reach the cathedral, where the event is to be celebrated. A single bell tolls like a funeral knell as we enter a small chapel connected with the sacred edifice. It is a dreary apartment, dismally lighted with two long wax candles. Nobody is present save myself, the male friends already mentioned, and the sacristan, who enlivens us by trying (and failing) to decorate, with false flowers and false candles, a miserable altar-piece at one extremity of the chapel. My importance as a bridegroom is not at present appreciated either by myself or by my friends, with whom I converse upon indifferent subjects, and who, like myself, are attired in ordinary walking costume.

Presently a kitrin, or gig on enormous wheels, drawn by a couple of mules, with a black postilion in jack-boots, halts without. The bride, accompanied by her mother and a friend, alight, and without taking notice of anybody in particular, pass silently into the chapel. The importance of my position does not reveal itself by this act, nor is it considerably improved when the ecclesiastic who is to marry us emerges from a dark corner, smiles artificially around him, and exhausts the rest of his amiability with the ladies. But the priest is not so unconscious of me as I suppose. Soon he singles me out from the group of males near him, and bids me follow him, my bride, and my future mother-in-law, into an adjacent chamber. But little is required of me here besides affixing my signature to a paper which I do not read; and when the holy man has addressed something or other to me in the Latin language, I am politely requested to withdraw. Shortly after my retirement the bride and her escort issue from the mysterious chamber, and after saluting us all round, take their departure and drive away. My distinguished position seems to be scarcely increased by these proceedings; but when my friends congratulate me, the lights of the chapel are extinguished, and the decorations on the miserable altar-piece are stowed away, I endeavour to realise the feelings of a married man. I follow my friends as they lead the way to the bride's parental roof, consoling myself with newly-rolled cigarettes as I walk along.

It is nearly two A.M. before we reach the scene of the festivities, where most of the guests are already assembled. A long table has been tastefully arranged with sweetmeats, cakes, fruit, wine, and other luxuries, and some of the guests, whose appetites could not be restrained, have already inaugurated the festivities. Much confusion, uproar, and struggling after dainties peculiar to a Cuban banquet pre-

vail, and it is not without an effort that I contrive at last to find a place near my bride. Healths are drunk and responded to incessantly, and often simultaneously; rather, as it would seem, for the excuse of drinking champagne and English bottled ale, than from motives of sentiment.

When enough cigarettes have been smoked, and enough wine and beer have been disposed of, all the company rises with one accord. The ladies throw light veils across their shoulders, the gentlemen don their panamas; and the bride and her mother, together with the bridegroom and all the guests, followed by an army of black domestics, leave Doña Belen's habitation, and marching in noisy procession along the narrow streets, arrive at the bride's future home. It is a one-storied dwelling with marble floors, whitewashed walls, and is furnished with brand-new cane-bottomed chairs and other adornments belonging to a Cuban residence. The huge doors and windows of every apartment are thrown open to their widest, and the interior being brilliantly lighted with gas, the view from the street is almost as complete as it is within the premises. Everybody crowds into the latter, and examines the arrangements of each chamber with as deep an interest as if they were wandering through an old baronial mansion with cards of invitation from its absent owner. The reception-room, the comedor or dining-room, the out-houses around the patio or court-yard, are carefully inspected by the throng, who are irrepressible even in respect of the dormitory assigned for the use of the bridegroom, and that allotted to the bride, and situated in quite a different direction.

Everybody's curiosity being satisfied, everybody, save the newly-married pair and a few black domestics, are wished a "muy buenas noches," or, more correctly speaking (for the hour is four A.M.), a very good morning.

The remains of this little romance are easily disposed of. A week after our marriage Cachita's stern parent, Don Severiano, returns from his trip to North America in a very precarious state of health, the voyage having rather increased than lessened the symptoms of his malady. He remains unaware of his daughter's alliance with me, and it is deemed prudent not to enlighten him until he is in a fit condition to receive the startling news. Meanwhile his fond daughter never leaves the sick-chamber to which he is consigned, and where, after a painful lingering of eight days, he departs for that bourn whence no traveller returns.

A BIT OF GLASS.

FAMILIARITY, if it do not always breed contempt, often begets unjust appreciation. We come to consider as matters of course, as if we picked them up in the streets, or as if they grew on hedges, things which are the result of years of investigation and ages of experiment. Light is our natural birthright, but we are apt to forget that glass is a long-sought, much-desiderated, hardly-found means of transmitting, modifying, and fully utilising that marvellous agent. We put on our spectacles to read this journal, with as little thought of their novelty and importance, as when we open our eyes on waking. With no greater heed does the sailor use his telescope to discover a signal, the beauty a cheval-glass to complete her toilet, and the wine-grower a bottle to retail his champagne. And yet those articles of daily utility are neither as old as the hills nor as simple as "Good-day to you."

Glass, once unknown in ordinary life, is now an object of daily and absolute necessity. Rich and poor alike must have it. Who looks out of window now through panes of oiled paper pierced with a knitting-needle to peer at the passers-by? Who drinks wine now out of china cups or silver tankards? What has become of the wine-skin and the "leather bottle"? Do our navigators trust to beacon-fires, or to glazed light-houses shining certainly and brightly, whether catoptrically or dioptrically? What is it which enables us to ripen grapes in April, and to have our winter gardens filled with flowers and fruits that Alcinous never saw or dreamt of? Glass, undoubtedly, has been one of the most powerful agents in advancing modern civilisation. Our forefathers worked their weary way through an age of stone and an age of iron. Those epochs represented rude but solid material progress. We are living in an age of glass, whose translucency symbolises the clear, onward gaze of intellectual advancement. No glass means no domestic luxury, nor even comfort, since darkness is a plague even in the warm climate of Egypt. No glass, no scientific discovery; without it the great majority of the potent army of 'ometers are impossible.

Glass, which gives a free passage to

light, sticks up "No thoroughfare" in the face of electricity. Hence it curbs, contains, and stores electricity, thereby rendering enormous service to the workers in electrical discovery or application. Glass has made all the difference in the condition of a science which can foretel future events with greater certainty than all the oracles of old—which can now predict, to a second, years beforehand, an eclipse of the sun or moon, or the occultation of a star—and the same science as known to Chaldean shepherds by what their unassisted eyes could tell them while watching the glories of a starlight night. And the unknown worlds revealed by the microscope, what knowledge should we have of them but for glass? The singular phenomena of locomotive plants, the curiosities of ciliary motion as seen on the heads of rotifers and elsewhere, the masses of animated jelly which take any shape and are constantly changing their protean forms, the proofs of design exhibited by the spiracles or breathing holes in the sides of insects, the multifarious crowds of life, activity, and ambiguous organism contained in a drop less than the head of a pin, would for us, without glass, be non-existent. He who has never used a microscope has but a limited cognisance of the marvels of nature. It is his own fault if the student remains without that knowledge; for it is placed within his easy reach by glass.

At every step we take in the domain of science, we meet with glass, glass again, and ever glass, applied to all sorts of purposes, obedient to the philosopher's will, assuming the most strange and improbable forms. Here it helps the modern Jupiter Tonans to grasp the elements of thunder—that is to say, of lightning, the producer of thunder—in his hand. There it helps the chemist, in his laboratory, to ask Matter the rules and reasons of its wilful conduct. Elsewhere it enables the anatomist, whether of self-conscious animals or of unconscious plants, to unravel the pattern according to which each special tissue is woven, to trace the mode and progress of organic growth, and to discover life, order, and beauty in apparently shapeless dirt and dust. Is it, then, too much to say that physical science owes much of its recent rapid development to glass? Modern science is founded on observation, and the whole universe, inviting inspection, lies before it. The wider the field of observation, the grander and the surer are the conclusions grasped. Glass enables us to make an enormous advance (without holding out the slightest hope of our ever approaching there) in the direction of the two opposite poles of immensity—the infinitely great and the infinitely small.

However general, now, may be the use of panes of glass, to allow the inhabitants to look out and the kindly sun to look into a house, we should be wrong in fancying that privilege to date from a very ancient past. Long after its discovery, glass was still rare, and, consequently, precious. In spite of what Strabo and Pliny have said respecting the glass-houses of Sidon and Memphis, it is nevertheless true that Athens and the other cities of Greece, at the height of their prosperity, had no conception of such a novelty as a glazed window. But in the year 79 before the Christian era, the date of Herculaneum's and Pompeii's destruction by Vesuvius, certain Romans, probably very rich patricians, fitted their windows with panes of glass. Sashes furnished with bluish-green glass have been found in disinterring Pompeian houses, and an analysis by M. Claudet shows its composition to be analogous to the glass of the present day.

During the reign of Tiberius, a considerable impulse was given to the manufacture of glass, which still continued extremely dear, preventing its frequent employment for windows. Glazed windows, however, for the people of the South, who had never been accustomed to that comfort, were things of minor necessity. Their lodgings consisted of little chambers, with scarcely any furniture in them, which they occupied only at night and a very small portion of the day, the greater part of their existence being spent in the streets and the public places. Small openings in the walls, near the ceiling of their apartments, allowed air and a modicum of light to enter. The houses of rich patricians only, or the imperial palaces, could boast of windows glazed—if we may say so—with thin slices of diaphanous alabaster, or with light plates of semi-transparent gypsum. Certain windows had neither translucid plates nor glass. They consisted of narrow slips of marble with open intervals between them. From this state of things the passage is long to the Crystal Palace, the new Kew palm-house, and glass-roofed railway stations.

Churches were the first buildings to patronise the re-application of glass to architectural purposes. Those of Brioude and Tours towards the close of the sixth

century, and the basilica of St. Sophia at Constantinople, exhibited the earliest specimens of glass-glazed windows. They were composed, not of panes like those now employed, but of little round pieces, known as "cives," fitted into grooves in wooden frames, and kept there in their place by plaster. In the twelfth century, painting on glass was invented. The first stained-glass windows were put up, in 1140, in the abbey of St. Denis. It was not till the fourteenth century that private dwellings were lighted by little square panes mounted in lead, such as we still see in the humblest habitations of our ancient towns. Thanks to Colbert, under Louis the Fourteenth, glass-houses were established in France which succeeded in manufacturing entire panes of respectable dimensions, but their employment was far from general.

The manufacture of glass for windows, in England, dates as far back as the seventh century. Its value in the sixteenth century may be judged from an order given by the Duke of Northumberland's steward, in 1567. "And because, during high winds, the glass windows in this castle and in other castles belonging to my lord duke got injured and broken, it is advisable that the glass frames in every window should be taken down and put in a place of safety when his grace departs. And if, at any time, his grace or others come to sojourn at any one of the said castles, they can be replaced without much expense; whereas, at present, the damage done is considerable, and the cost of repairs exceedingly heavy." Glass panes can hardly be said to have come into general use before the close of the eighteenth century. In fact, during that century, in French provincial towns, and even in Paris, there flourished a corporation of artificers, called "chassissiers," whose occupation consisted in fitting up windows with oiled paper in the place of glass.

Jules Magny, the clever writer of the Histoire d'un Morceau de Verre, which supplies the basis of this paper, in giving the genealogy of his "Bit of Glass," points out to his unscientific readers the difference between the mixture and the combination of minerals. You may grind sulphur and iron filings to the finest powder, and after mixing them together mechanically as thoroughly and in whatever proportions you please, you can always separate one from the other, provided that both of them are dry. But if you heat the mixture in a crucible, to the temperature of a good blacksmith's forge, you get a combination of those substances. You may reduce the mass to an impalpable powder, but you will obtain neither a particle of sulphur nor a particle of iron. Chemistry demonstrates that in the smallest atom of the new substance produced, there exist both sulphur and iron. The two ingredients are intimately united, combined as chemists say.

The elements which enter into the composition of the subject of glass, are silex or flint, soda, potash, lime, clay or its metallic basis, and minium or red lead, the matter which colours house-painters' priming. They are mixed together in the crucible of the glass-house, and then combined or melted by the aid of fire. The temperature (in all cases high) at which fusion is attained, varies with the kind of glass and the ingredients of which it is composed. Window-glass is made of flint, soda, and lime; bottle-glass of flint and iron (in the shape of ferruginous sand), soda, lime, and clay; crown-glass of flint, potash, and lime; and so on for other kinds of glass. The greater the number of bases used in the composition, the more easily they are melted into glass. Hence, for cheap glasses, such as bottle-glass, the manufacturer mixes as many different elements as possible, in order to obtain his result at the least possible expenditure of fuel. Nevertheless, as often happens, what is gained in one way is lost in another; for the greater the fusibility of the glass, the more it is liable to decomposition by atmospheric and other influences.

This decomposition is evidenced by curious and even beautiful phenomena. Old window-glass, and especially stable window-glass, manifests incipient decay by the iridescent tints which cover its surface. Bottles that have long been buried in the earth or submerged in ponds become most striking and ornamental specimens, from the gorgeous hues which they display; their transparence is gone, and they are coated with small scales shining with metallic lustre. By exposure to great heat and gradual cooling, glass also becomes unvitrified and opaque, presenting a great resemblance to crockery, and named, after its discoverer, Réaumur's porcelain. The opacity results from the formation of microscopic crystals of one of the earthy silicates which constitute glass, in consequence of the volatilisation of the alkaline ingredient. Such porcelain is in

request for decorative purposes; nor is this the only way in which the decomposition of the original compound has been turned to account.

Glass, the undoubted offspring of Fire, without whose agency it could have no existence, has been employed, with some success, to defy its parent and hold him in check. Two conditions are necessary to cause paper, linen, canvas, muslin, wood, and other combustible matters to blaze, that is, to burn with the emission of flame, which flame is the means by which fire spreads the most rapidly and makes the most destructive havoc. Those conditions are the presence of heat and the access of air. Intense heat alone does not suffice to cause textile or woody substances to burn with a flame; they must also be in contact with air, or with the oxygen, which is the active portion of the air. Without this second condition they are slowly carbonised, never bursting into flame, although they become red hot. It is in this way that wood is converted into charcoal, in air-tight cylinders, for the manufacture of gunpowder.

Consequently, wood or articles of clothing are rendered incombustible simply by covering them with a layer of some substance which keeps them from all contact with air during their exposure to fire. This substance, Fuchs's soluble glass, was discovered under the following circumstances.

In 1780, after a recent importation of Bohemian glass, two French glass-houses set to work to imitate the article. One of them employed a mixture of silex and potash in equal quantities; the other, a mixture, also in equal quantities, of silex, potash, and lime. But while the glass made by the latter establishment, which was situated in the Vosges, perfectly resisted the action of the atmosphere, that produced by the former, in Champagne, was not only deficient in clearness and solidity, but attracted atmospheric moisture to such a degree that the hollow feet of drinking-glasses in the shops became filled with a solution of carbonate of potash. A soluble glass was therefore obtained by employing only sand and potash in its composition.

M. Fuchs, who doubtless heard of this curious fact, thought of turning it to a useful purpose, although apparently it was capable of none. By modifying its composition to the following proportions—silex 69.88 plus potash 30.12, making together one hundred parts—he obtained a glass soluble in cold water, which solution, applied to textile fabrics or wood, has the property of rendering them incombustible. The evaporation of the water leaves on their surface a thin stratum of matter fusible by heat, which deprives the subjacent tissues of the air necessary for their combustion.

Soluble glass is now obtained by melting in a crucible a mixture of fifteen parts of quartz reduced to a fine powder, ten parts of carbonate of potash, and one part of pulverised charcoal. For use, it is broken up into little bits, and then dissolved in boiling water, till the solution has the consistency of syrup. It is somewhat muddy, and has an alkaline taste. Nevertheless, it must be very pure not to effloresce under the action of the air after a certain lapse of time. A good plan is to cover the articles to be protected with several coats of the soluble glass, beginning with a weak solution, to be followed by a more concentrated liquid. Its efficacy is also increased by mixing with it some other incombustible substance, powdered clay for instance.

Of all known substances, soluble glass is the best preservative of tissues from flame, without injury to their quality. Still, as the alkali might prove destructive to colours like Prussian blue, theatrical scenery, after being rendered incombustible, should receive a coat of alum, and when that is dry, another of chalk. Theatres, however, make but little use of this means of security. Their proprietors and managers seem to consider destruction by fire as the natural death of every playhouse. Actresses and dancers are more excusable. Treatment with soluble glass does certainly render dresses at first stiff, and afterwards moist and limp; and coquetry will run the risk of being burnt alive, rather than sacrifice appearances. A volume might be filled with the consequences of a spark or a gas-flame carried aside by a draught of air on the stage or among the scenes of a theatre.

A much more popular application of glass is its conversion into spectacles; respecting which we only recommend the re-perusal of the Vicar of Wakefield, as a warning not to buy a gross of green ones. All coloured glasses fatigue the eye, whether green or blue, through the monotonous hue with which they invest every object. In no way does monotony agree with the human subject; variety and change are as necessary to his eyes as

to his stomach. Everybody knows that nobody on earth can constantly live on the same sort of food; toujours perdrix, salmon served to 'prentices five times a week, an unlimited glut of confectioners' tarts and lollipops, potted sprats at every meal, Swiss honey ditto, are sure to create disgust in the end. Our eyes have identical need of change; blue and green spectacles soon become wearisome. Their intended object can only be answered by glasses simply and slightly blackened. They allow things to retain their natural hues, producing only the effect of a cloudy day or incipient twilight.

PHILIP ASTLEY.

More than a century ago, when gallant General Elliott, afterwards famous as Baron Heathfield and Gibraltar, returned from the expedition against the coast of France to raise and discipline his regiment of light horse, there joined his standard a youth of seventeen or so, one Philip Astley, whose soldierly bearing, strict regard for discipline, and skill as a horseman, soon won for him the favourable notice of his commander. He was appointed one of the rough-riders and teacher and breaker to the regiment. Born at Newcastle-under-Lyne, in 1742, he had been brought up to his father's business of veneer-cutting and cabinet-making. Of education of any other kind he had little or none.

Elliot's Light Horse was known as the Tailors' Regiment, from an odd belief that, for unascertained reasons, the professors of the sartorial art had joined its ranks in great numbers. But, tailors or not, the corps saw active service and earned great distinction. At the close of the German war the regiment was reviewed by George the Third, who, in recognition of its admirable conduct in the field, directed that thenceforward it should be known as the King's Royal Regiment of Light Dragoons.

Young Philip Astley had been promoted to the rank of sergeant-major. He now solicited and obtained his discharge. General Elliott, loth to part with him, bestowed upon him a most honourable certificate of service. This document set forth the exploits of the young soldier. Whilst the horses of the regiment were landing from flat-bottomed boats, one of the animals in its alarm had leaped into the sea, and was in danger of being carried away by the tide. Astley immediately plunged in after it, and catching the bridle, swam to shore with the horse in safety before the boat arrived from which it had escaped. Again, at the disembarkation of the troops at the mouth of the Weser, he was the chief means of saving several men and horses when the boat bearing them had accidentally overturned. At the battle of Emsdorff he took a French standard, and had his horse shot under him; but, mounting another charger, he bore off his prize, in spite of the efforts of an escort of the enemy's infantry, at least ten in number, by whom he was wounded. At the battle of Friedburg he led the advanced guard, and personally assisted, under a very heavy fire, in bringing away the hereditary Prince of Brunswick, who was lying wounded within the enemy's lines. In addition to this certificate, Elliott generously presented his trooper with a fine charger, which, as the Spanish Horse, afterwards made the acquaintance and secured the applause of a very large public.

Astley had not quitted the army without planning out his future career. He had resolved to turn to account his skill as a horseman and his knowledge of horses. What are now known as "equestrian performances" were then in a very immature condition. Still exhibitions of this kind were to be seen occasionally in the suburbs of London, and, notably, at a place of entertainment, long since departed, called the Jubilee Gardens, "at the sign of the Three Hats, near the turnpike, at Islington." Here performers known as "Price, Johnson, and old Sampson," were wont to exhibit so-called "feats of horsemanship." These Astley had seen, and seeing had determined to rival and out-do. He cultivated an acquaintance with the three equestrians, and gleaned from them certain of the mysteries of their craft. Soon afterwards he commenced his course as a public exhibitor in an open field, "near Glover's Halfpenny Hatch at Lambeth." His means and appliances were certainly limited enough. He literally blew his own trumpet in the public streets, and distributed handbills soliciting patronage. His "stud" consisted at this time merely of his charger, the gift of his general, and a second horse purchased in Smithfield for five pounds. His receipts were not large, and, when not occupied with his new pursuits, he was content to increase his means by plying his old trade of cabinet-making.

Still he was gaining ground. He tra-

versed the provinces, performed at the different fairs, and met with success. Gradually he put money in his purse. At length he resolved upon quitting the harassing life of an itinerant showman, and opening a fixed place of exhibition near London. He therefore hired a portion of a timber-yard at the Lambeth foot of Westminster Bridge, enclosed it with boarding, erected seats for the audience, and roofed them imperfectly with canvas. A rope defined the ring, which was canopied only by the skies. Sixpence was charged for admission to the better seats, and threepence for children and servants. In the year 1770, however, when the performances were perhaps of a more ambitious character, the prices were raised, and one shilling was the admission to the superior benches. The building was still little better than an open booth, for the summer of 1771 proving very wet, he was unable to perform during many weeks of his season. But he continued to introduce improvements for the greater comfort of his patrons, and also to strengthen his company, now adding feats of agility, tumbling, and vaulting to his own equestrian feats. In 1775, his prices were two shillings to the gallery or boxes, and one shilling to the "riding ground," or pit. It was now announced that the seats were all protected from the weather, and that "slight showers" would not prevent the performances.

About this time fortune greatly favoured him. He had lent his landlord, the timber merchant, two hundred pounds, secured by mortgage of the whole timber-yard and its contents. The mortgagor suddenly disappeared. Astley foreclosing, obtained, by due process of law, absolute possession of the property, and disposed of the timber at a valuation. Further, he chanced to pick up at the foot of Westminster Bridge a valuable diamond ring. This, no one appearing to claim it, he sold for sixty pounds. With the proceeds of these sales he was enabled to open, in 1779, a more completely roofed edifice, which he called the Amphitheatre Riding-House. Hitherto, his performances in Lambeth had been presented in the morning only. At night he had given a miscellaneous entertainment at No. 22, Piccadilly. Here no circus was possible, but he had exhibited Les Ombres Chinoises, feats of sleight-of-hand, a conjuring horse, comic dancing, imitations of birds, performing dogs, fireworks, &c. But it seemed to him that the time had now come for attempting a candle-light exhibition at his theatre in Lambeth. Accordingly in Passion Week, 1781, he ventured to announce two night performances. The experiment was thoroughly successful. Evening exhibitions at the Amphitheatre became firmly established. The entertainments he had formerly given in Piccadilly were now intermingled with the feats of the circus. One or two female performers appeared in the ring. "Master Astley," the son of the manager, rose into notice as an equestrian. A "beautiful zebra," valued at four hundred guineas, was exhibited, and esteemed a great marvel. Balancing, the "Polander's tricks on chairs," the "Trampolin tricks," tumbling, and "slack-rope vaulting," also figured in the programme. "Clown to the above tricks by Mr. Miller." It was announced, moreover, that "Ladies and gentlemen are carefully instructed to manage the horse and ride with safety. Horses are broke in for all denominations. No persons to bring dogs."

But for some years Astley had been compelled to pay the penalty of success, and to encounter an opposition which was growing more and more powerful. As early as 1771, a clever equestrian, one Charles Hughes, described as "a fine stalwart fellow, who could have carried an ox away on his shoulders, and afterwards eaten him for supper," had enclosed a Ride, near Stangate-street, Blackfriars, calling it the British Horse Academy. The early advertisements of the rival managers are certainly negligent in grammar and spelling, but they are instructive as to the attractions submitted to the public. Astley had probably announced the speedy departure of his troop for France. His rival proclaims: "Hughes has the honour to inform the nobility, &c., that he has no intention of setting out every day to France for three following seasons, his ambition being fully satisfied by the applause he has received from the foreign gentlemen who come over the sea to see him. Clementina and Miss Huntley ride one, two, and three horses at full speed, and takes leaps surprising. A little lady, only eight years old, rides two horses at full speed by herself without the assistance of any one to hold her on. Enough to put any one in fits to see her!" Again: "Hughes, with the celebrated Sobieska Clementina, the famous Miss Huntley, and an astonishing young gentleman (son of a person of quality), will exhibit at Blackfriars-road more extraordinary things than ever yet

witnessed, such as leaping over a horse forty times without stopping between springs. Leaps the bar standing on the saddle with his back to the horse's tail, and vice versâ. Rides at full speed with his right foot on the saddle, and his left toe in his mouth. Two surprising *feet*. Mrs. Hughes takes a fly, and fires a pistol; rides at full speed standing on pint pots, mounts pot by pot, higher still, to the terror of all who see her! H. carries a lady at full speed over his head—surprising! The young gentleman will recite verses of his own making, and act Mark Antony between the leaps!"

Here is a bill of Astley's: "This and every evening. Horsemanship by Mr. Astley, Mr. Taylor, Signor Markutchy, Miss Vangable, and other transcendent performers. This performance will be commenced by a new minuet danced by two horses in a most extraordinary manner. A comical musical piece called the Awkward Recruit. The amazing exhibition of the dancing dogs from France and Italy, and other genteel parts of the globe, consisting of: 1. Two dogs as chairmen, carrying a monkey to a maskyrade. 2. Two dogs disputing poleticks. 3. A company of dogs carrying from a vineyard baskets of grapes, and accompanied by a Savoyard with a magic lanton. 4. A dog as a lady of quality in her equipage, attended by others in elegant liveries. 5. A dog cobbling. 6. A dog that walks on any two of his legs. 7. Two dogs as a tumbler and his attendant clown. 8. A dog dressed in a Spanish habbit, taking another little dog to a boarding school. With a variety of others, too numerous for insertion. This exhibition will conclude with a variety of dogs dressed in militaire beseeching a town. One of them represents a corporal returning with the colurs of the citadel in his mouth to his general. He halts on three legs, being supposed to have received a musket-ball in one of his four feet. Two bull-dogs. The English bull-dog, rather than quit his hold, suffers himself to be drawn thirty feet high, whilst the mashine is surrounded with fireworks, representing a heavy discharge of small arms and artillery. Tumbling and other unaccountable exercises by Signor Bellmott. To which will be added a new pantomime, called Harlequin Puzzle 'em."

This spirited competition was maintained for some time, albeit, during part of the summer of 1773, for some real or fancied irregularities, the exhibitions of both Hughes and Astley were interdicted by the Surrey magistrates. But in 1782 the Blackfriars opposition assumed very formidable proportions. A permanent building, called the Royal Circus and Equestrian Philharmonic Academy — a very comprehensive title — was erected on a vacant plot of ground in Southwark, the site of the present Surrey Theatre. It was designed to present equestrian and dramatic entertainments of a new and improved character. The scheme was devised by Charles Dibdin, the famous sea-song writer, to whom is due the distinction of originating the "equestrian drama." "Horsemanship," he writes in his Memoirs, "was at that time very much admired, and I considered that if I could divest it of its blackguardism"—(this is severe)—"it might be made an object of public consequence. I proposed therefore that it should embrace all the dexterity and reputation of ancient chivalry, that tournaments, running at the ring, and other feats of equestrian celebrity, should be performed, and that a classical and elegant turn should be given to exercises of this description. I therefore proposed to have a stage, on which might be represented spectacles, each to terminate with a joust or a tilting match, or some grand object so managed as to form a novel and striking coup de théâtre, and that the business of the stage and the ring might be united." The Royal Circus was opened in November, 1782, but was closed again at Christmas. The Surrey magistrates refused to license the building, and the hope of obtaining the sanction of the Chamberlain for the performances was disappointed by the discovery that his lordship's powers did not then extend beyond the precincts of the Court or of the City of Westminster. During the Christmas holidays the magistrates attended the theatre in person to enforce their authority. A serious disturbance ensued. The Riot Act was read from the stage, the military were called in, and the audience promptly ejected from the building.

The wrath of outraged law also fell upon Astley, who had been endeavouring, by increasing the attractions of his entertainment, to make head against the rival house. He also was without a license, but, with more courage than veracity, he announced that his theatre was under the special protection of a royal patent. Immediately after the closing of Hughes and Dibdin's Circus, however, Astley was committed to prison for performing illegally. He was

soon released from durance by the kindly intervention of Lord Chancellor Thurlow, whose daughters Astley had taught riding. Subsequently the chancellor was instrumental in obtaining a license for Astley's Amphitheatre, and the magistrates saw fit to sanction the opening of the Royal Circus. The two theatres now entered upon a course of rivalry of a most active kind.

Astley, jealous of his "birthright," as he was wont to consider his precedence in establishing an amphitheatre on the Surrey side of the Thames, now followed the example of the Royal Circus, and added a stage to his ring. He embellished his house after a new fashion, painting the interior to resemble foliage, and gave the theatre the new name of the Royal Grove. A substantial roof now protected the circus or riding-school. The timber employed in this improvement he obtained on very moderate terms. In those days, after a Westminster election, it was the privilege of the mob to pull down and appropriate the planks and poles that had composed the hustings in Covent Garden. Astley announced his willingness to purchase these materials, and was soon the possessor of a sufficient supply.

During the intervals of his seasons at the Royal Grove, Astley carried his troupe of equestrians and voltigeurs to Dublin and Paris, and established amphitheatres in both those cities. In Paris he originated the cirque known to modern times as Franconi's. It was in 1786 that young Astley had the honour of exhibiting his feats of strength and agility in the presence of the Court of Versailles. The king and queen, much impressed with his skill as an equestrian, his grace of port and symmetry of figure, presented him with a gold medal set with diamonds, and surnamed him the English Rose, in allusion to the title of the French Rose, which had been bestowed upon that most renowned of male dancers, the elder Vestris. In Paris, however, Astley brought upon himself the interference of the police. His endeavour to erect a stage was met by a prohibition at the instance of a M. Nicolai, the proprietor of a rival entertainment. But Astley discomfited opposition by so contriving that his stage rested upon the backs of sixteen horses, harnessed, tackled, and arranged after a plan of his own. Upon this platform he could exhibit such feats and tricks as seemed good to him, while the entertainment was still within the terms of his license to present equestrian performances only.

The man's life was one of unremitting enterprise and energy. Occasionally, however, his passion for speculation ended disastrously. He attempted to establish floating baths in the Thames off Westminster, and with this view constructed a covered vessel of enormous proportions. This great bathing machine, however, found little favour—it was not a washing generation. After a few years the scheme was abandoned, and the floating bath broken up and sold for firewood. On the king's birthday he gave a grand display of fireworks from barges moored in the centre of the Thames off Lambeth. So many accidents resulted from this exhibition that it was in time abandoned. In lieu of it he established a boat-race, and gave a wherry as a prize to the winner. He was an expert swimmer, and one day for a wager floated on his back in the Thames from Westminster Bridge to Blackfriars, with a flag erect in each hand.

The French Revolution hindered for some time his performances in Paris. His amphitheatre was converted into barracks. After the peace of Amiens, however, he prosecuted his claims before the First Consul, regained possession of his premises, and obtained rent for the whole period of their occupancy by the troops of the Revolution.

He had previously resumed his old profession, and served on the Continent in the army of the Duke of York. And the veteran trooper had anew distinguished himself. In a retreat, by a spirited manœuvre, he had recaptured a piece of ordnance, drawn by four horses, which the French were carrying away. The royal commander, greatly pleased, straightway gave him the four horses as a reward for his activity. Astley immediately sold the steeds by auction on the field, and expended the proceeds in refreshments for the comrades of his troop.

On the 16th of August, 1794, the Royal Grove Theatre was burnt to the ground. The duke, reading an account of the fire in the newspapers, at once gave Astley leave of absence to return home, and, if possible, retrieve his heavy loss. With extraordinary activity he set to work to rebuild his house in Lambeth, and meanwhile engaged the old Lyceum Theatre for equestrian performances. On Easter Monday, 1795, he was enabled to open a new Amphitheatre of Arts greatly superior in size, elegance, and convenience to his former house. He now advanced the rate of charges for admission, and ventured upon performances of a more pretentious character. On the

score of his military achievements, he obtained the patronage both of the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, and in 1798 was permitted, for the first time, to bestow upon his establishment the title of Astley's Royal Amphitheatre. After the peace he acquired great popularity by admitting soldiers of all ranks gratis to his performances, and providing special seats adjoining the orchestra for their accommodation. The audience crowded the theatre merely to look at the troops fresh from the war, and a spectacle of the Siege of Valenciennes, produced with great completeness, attracted all London. It may be added that, previous to the real siege, Astley had been of service to the government in superintending the shipping of the horses of the artillery from Greenwich and Woolwich. When King George and his sons returned from witnessing the disembarkation of the victorious army, they passed the doors of the amphitheatre, and received the salute of its manager, attired in the Windsor uniform, and mounted upon a splendidly caparisoned charger.

"Who is that, Frederick?" asked the king.

"Mr. Astley, sir," explained the Duke of York; "one of our good friends—a veteran—one that fought in the German war."

Thereupon the sovereign bowed in his most gracious manner to the equestrian. Astley's delight was extreme. For days he could say nothing to his friends but, "The king bowed specially to *me*. What do you think of that, my dear boy?"

But the brief peace brought great peril and fresh troubles to Astley. He was in Paris on the eve of the issue of the famous decree for the detention of all English subjects in France. News reached him that his amphitheatre had again been destroyed by fire. A passport could not possibly be procured. He feigned illness, and obtained permission to proceed to Montpellier to drink the waters. From thence, accompanied by two of his nieces, he journeyed to the frontier, and by constantly exhibiting a brace of pistols he compelled the postilion to force his horses to their topmost speed. The frontier crossed, he proceeded more leisurely to Frankfort, where he learned of the death of his wife. From Frankfort he journeyed north, and at length was able to take ship for England. His safe arrival excited the greatest surprise. His friends had all concluded that he was one of the unfortunates made prisoners under the Milan decree.

The second burning of the amphitheatre involved a loss of thirty thousand pounds, of which little more than a sixth was covered by insurance. Very shortly after his return, however, Astley laid the first stone of a new building, which was completed in sufficient time to open on Easter Monday, 1804. He was his own architect, and supervised the works unceasingly. "Early or late, hail, rain, frost, snow, or sunshine impeded him not. There he was, drilling the men at their work, as if he had been training a regiment of soldiers for the rigid duties of a winter's campaign." So writes a member of his company.

Astley now retired from active interest in the control of the establishment, still receiving, however, one clear half of the annual profits. The other half went to young Astley, who was manager, and had for partners Messrs. Parker, Hardy, Crossman, Smith, and Davis, who had probably found the capital requisite for the reconstruction of the theatre. But the elder equestrian could not long endure to be idle. He was old, bent, and grey, had grown very rotund of figure, and suffered severely at times from the wound he had received in his youth. Still he felt there was life in him yet. He could not hope to present himself any more in the circus as a performer, but the career of a manager was still open to him. Why should he not establish a new amphitheatre on the Middlesex side of the Thames? He obtained a sixty years lease, from the Earl of Craven, of a shapeless piece of ground in Wych-street, Strand, which had recently been cleared by the removal of a rookery of unsavoury tenements, and set to work to build the Olympic Pavilion. Some old naval prizes being then on sale, he purchased the timber of a French man-of-war (he always described the vessel as the "Wheel de Parry"), and with the masts, yards, and bowsprit, he formed the main props and supports of his new playhouse. Seated in his one-horse chaise, barely spacious enough to contain his redundant portliness, he was in attendance day after day, directing his workmen, and, with his old vehemence, urging on the completion of the building. There was little brickwork, the interior being in the form of a tent, and the roof of tin. The accommodation for the audience consisted of one tier of boxes and a pit, in the rear of which was what was called the gallery, separated from the pit by iron chains. The theatre, which cost him eight hundred pounds only, was opened to the public in 1806, under a license obtained through the influence of

Queen Charlotte, for "music, dancing, burlettas, pantomime, and equestrian exhibitions."

The undertaking proved a disastrous failure. Let him present what attractions he might—even to the sparring exhibitions of Dutch Sam, and other famous pugilists—the public could not be induced to patronise Astley's Middlesex Amphitheatre. After losing ten thousand pounds, he determined, in 1813, to dispose of it. "We'll throw the bone, Johnny," he said to his son, "and let the dogs fight for it. Some one will snap at it." Elliston became the purchaser of the Olympic Pavilion for a sum of two thousand eight hundred pounds, and the grant of a small annuity during the life of Astley. There was but one payment of the annuity. On the 20th of October, 1814, aged seventy-two, Astley died at his house adjoining the Amphitheatre in Paris, and was interred in the cemetery of Père la Chaise. His son, "Young Astley," to whom he had bequeathed the interest arising from his somewhat encumbered property, survived seven years only, dying in Paris in the same house—"the same bed, and the same bed-room," says one exact biographer—in 1821. The son was laid beside his father in Père la Chaise.

Philip Astley was undoubtedly the best horse-tamer of his time, and as a judge of what may be called "trick horse-flesh," he has perhaps never been equalled. He generally obtained his stud from Smithfield, caring, as he said, "little for shape, make, or colour; temper was the only consideration." He rarely gave more than five pounds for each. For this price he had obtained his accomplished horse Billy, a great popular favourite, playful as a kitten with those he knew, and deeply versed in all the learning of the circus. Billy could fire off pistols, take a tea-kettle off a blazing fire, lay the cloth, arrange cups and saucers, and invite the clown to tea. All agreed that he could do everything but talk. But one day Billy was arrested by the sheriff, not on account of any extravagance of his own, but owing to the misconduct of a groom, one Saunders, to whom he had been lent. Saunders had been many years in Astley's employ, and had borrowed Billy to exhibit him by way of private speculation. This terminated in the prisonment of Saunders in the Fleet, and the sale of Billy to the highest bidder. For three years the favourite was lost sight of. Accidentally two of Astley's "riders" discovered Billy drawing a cart in Whitechapel. There could be no question of the fact, for upon hearing a peculiar clicking together of the nails of the forefinger and thumb—one of the signs or sounds Astley had always employed in training his stud—Billy had pricked up his ears, pranced and danced in a very remarkable manner. The recognition was mutual. Billy's present proprietor was well content to part with him at a very moderate price, "for," as he explained, "though he's the best-tempered creature breathing, yet sometimes he does cut such very rum capers that we calls him the Mountebank." Forthwith Billy was restored to his friends; all was forgiven, and he reappeared in the circus as though he had never been absent from it, made tea, went through all his "business," and so continued to do for many years, dying at last of sheer old age, universally respected and regretted.

But a steed even more famous than Billy was Astley's charger, the Spanish Horse, given him by General Elliott after the German war. The Spanish Horse could perform all Billy's tricks and more; could ungirth his own saddle, wash his own feet in a pail of water, and, as some allege, even curry-comb himself. The Spanish Horse is reputed to have lived to the mature age of forty-two. When his teeth failed him, he subsisted upon a daily allowance of two half-quartern loaves. Even after death he served the theatre of which he had long been a main ornament and support. His hide was tanned and made into a thunder drum, "which," writes an intimate friend of the deceased, "was placed on the prompt side of the orchestra, and when its rumbling sounds died on the ears of those who knew the circumstances, it served to their recollection as a parting knell." The thunder drum probably went the way of many theatrical properties. It must have perished in 1841—if it survived so long—when for a third time Astley's amphitheatre was totally consumed by fire.

It has been said that Astley was uneducated, and it may be added that he was a man of somewhat violent temper. His energetic nature was wont to find expression in very intemperate language. But time out of mind fierce words and commiratory expletives have been considered indispensable to the due carrying on of the business of the stage. He was a very despot in his theatre. He had the reputation of applying his whip indiscriminately to his biped and quadruped players. Perhaps it was only to the last named he referred, however, when he said to Mr. Harris,

the manager of Covent Garden, who had complained of the insubordination of his company, "Why don't you serve your performers as I do mine? Never let 'em have anything to eat till they've done acting." When told by his master-carpenter that it would be impossible to produce a new play by the time he had fixed for its performance, he demanded angrily, "Who's Mr. Impossible, sir? I don't know him. I never heard of him. He don't live in this house, sir! and he never shall! Go to your work!" He was obeyed, and the piece was duly forthcoming at the stated date. "Do you think you are dealing with your horses?" John Kemble asked him once, with superb scorn, when a dispute had arisen in regard to the rent to be paid for the Liverpool Theatre, the property of the tragedian, which Astley had hired for a season. "D—n you, sir!" cried Astley, hotly, "and do you think you are going to play Richard the Third over me!" But, with all his peremptory speech and roughness of manner, he seems to have been affectionately regarded by the members of his company. He was straightforward in his dealings with them, and had real consideration for their interests. Still it was not advisable for them to run counter to his opinions as a stage-manager. Of the public he was certainly a most faithful servant, and laboured most assiduously for their entertainment. And he succeeded in winning a higher place in general regard for equestrian performances than they had ever previously attained. From first to last he constructed no fewer than nineteen amphitheatres.

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER IX. A CRISIS.

On the morning after the dinner given by the directors of the Friendly Grasp Insurance Office, on the occasion of their half-yearly audit, at which Doctor Asprey and Mr. Delabole had been present, the last-named gentleman, attired in a gorgeous dressing-gown, now and then making a slight addition to his toilet, now and then taking stray snatches of breakfast from the well-laden table, and all the time glancing at the newspaper which he carried about with him, suddenly saw the end of a letter sticking out from the rack which formed the usual receptacle for his correspondence in his absence.

"Strange," said Mr. Delabole, laying aside the newspaper, and advancing towards the rack, "that I did not notice this last night. It must have been there, but I must have overlooked it in my eagerness to get at Irving's reply. From my dear Philip, eh! Now, what can he want?" he muttered, as he tore open the envelope and hastily perused its contents.

Mr. Delabole's eyebrows, at first uplifted, then contracted, betokened astonishment and dissatisfaction at what he read. "Two or three days away from London, and he's to be married to-morrow week, and to travel for at least a month. What can take him away just now? You're a slippery customer, Master Philip," continued Mr. Delabole, shaking his head as he apostrophised his absent friend, "a very slippery customer! And yet what a clever fellow! What an admirable notion that was of getting Asprey to insist on old Heriot's people keeping from the invalid all letters and telegrams, anything touching on business matters! That secures us from any chance of discovery during the next few days, which are all important. Irving has now been informed that his friend has signed the memorandum of association, thereby testifying to his belief in the soundness of the concern. He will probably write or telegraph at once to Springside, but neither his letter nor his message will be shown to his friend. In forty-eight hours, perhaps, in a week at furthest, according to Asprey's idea, old Heriot will be dead. His illness will be sufficient excuse for his not having replied to his friend's inquiry, and Mr. Irving will stand committed to the subscription of a good round sum to prop the falling fortunes of the Terra del Fuegos mine.

"That cutting off the invalid from all communication with the outside world was Vane's idea, and the signature—how admirably it was done! but Master Philip must not think that I am paid in full, or that I intend to make no further use of that information which I was lucky enough to obtain. Now that he has done what I require, he shall marry the widow without any unpleasant suggestion on my part of Miss What's-her-name, the actress, and the Chepstow register. But when he returns to town I shall have to talk to him like a parent about the investment of Mrs. Bendixen's sixty thousand pounds. Meanwhile, I wonder what can take him away just now? I will send for Gillman, and—by Jove! I had forgotten it was Sunday!" he cried, as the ringing of the church bells

broke upon his ear; "Sunday, when Gillman is probably enjoying his domestic felicity at Camden Town, and would object to being disturbed. However, I will send for him to-morrow morning, and put him on the scent again."

Mr. Delabole's guess as to the manner in which Mr. Gillman was spending his Sabbath was not entirely correct. In an ordinary way Mr. Gillman was in the habit of devoting himself to his family on a Sunday, and spending the morning in washing himself—a proceeding which, with him, was not daily but hebdomadal; getting rid of the growth of a straggling but stubborn beard, putting on his Sunday suit, consisting of swallow-tail black coat, rusty black trousers, and black satin waistcoat very much frayed at the pockets, and his Sunday shirt, which was exuberant in waving collar and bulging breast, but fell short in the matter of wristband. Thus magnificently arrayed, Mr. Gillman, after presiding over the one o'clock dinner, and smoking a long clay pipe, as he indoctrinated himself with the politics of the Sunday newspaper, and glowed with delight as he read the fulminations of Brutus against a dissipated aristocracy, would take the children for a very wretched and melancholy walk, from which they would all return draggled, and wearied, and cross; and Mr. Gillman would not recover his equanimity until, the children having been duly slapped and sent to bed, he and Mrs. G. would settle down to a quiet "bit of supper" and a glass of "something hot," over which they would discuss their family and their neighbours until bedtime.

This, however, was an extraordinary occasion. It was, indeed, one o'clock, and on Sunday; but instead of being at home, dispensing portions of the baked shoulder of mutton and the potatoes swimming beneath it in a brown dish, Mr. Gillman was seated in an up-stairs room of the Dog and Duck at Mortlake, an untouched glass of ale and a clean pipe on the table before him. Mr. Gillman was in his working-day suit, which was merely a shabby repetition of his Sabbath garb, minus the black satin waistcoat. He was engaged on a secret mission, and it was most important that he should not be recognised; but though his whole life was passed in spying and dogging, in listening and marking down, Mr. Gillman never condescended to the adoption of disguise. He had a very mean opinion of the detective police in general, and of their conduct in such matters in particular. "What is the use," he would remark, "of a policeman dressing up himself as a butcher or a cabman, or what not? He don't get rid of his policeman's hands, does he? he don't get rid of his policeman's feet, does he? You could swear to both of 'em anywhere, just as if they were in berlins and bluchers. Besides, if you don't want to be seen don't show yourself, leastways to make any mark. 'Did you see any one go by?' perhaps they ask. 'Yes,' says you, having noticed, 'I saw a butcher or a cabby.' No one can tell what I am; all they could say is, 'I saw a man, and not much of that neither.'"

Mr. Gillman's companion, however—for he was not alone—evidently did not entertain the same idea. When he first entered the room, his wideawake hat was pulled down over his brow, the collar of his coat was pushed up over his ear, and it was not until he had looked round and ascertained, without doubt, that they were quite alone, that he emerged from his wrappings, and showed the somewhat worn and anxious features of Mr. Philip Vane.

The conference between this worthy pair had been long, and, on Philip Vane's part, animated. He had asked his questions impetuously, cogitated over the replies, and expressed his determination with a vehemence which seemed to awake no response in Mr. Gillman's quiet little frame. Drawing hieroglyphical figures with the stem of the empty pipe on the beer-stained table before him, Mr. Gillman sat, speaking only when he was spoken to, and then packing his reply into the smallest possible compass.

"And that was the last time you heard of her?" asked Philip Vane, after a pause of some minutes' duration.

"The very last," replied Mr. Gillman.

"Employed in the telegraph-office at Springside?"

"Exactly; she and her sister got in there through the influence of a clergyman, name of——"

"Never mind his name," interrupted Vane, "I don't want that now. All this coincides exactly with my own ideas upon the subject."

"I shall have a spare day or two this week, Mr. V., I expect," said Gillman, "and I could run down to Springside if you wish it, and——"

"No, not the slightest occasion for you to do that. You have brought the inquiry to a perfectly satisfactory conclusion. And there," laying the note on the table, "are the ten pounds I promised you."

"Thank you, sir," said Gillman, taking up the note and folding it away in a recess of his greasy pocket-book. "You have kept your word in this. I look to you to keep it in the other matter."

"What other matter?"

"Regarding keeping it from our governor that I have been working for you in this matter. I would not have it known to Mr. D. for ten times ten pounds. It is not so much the "sack," which I should receive prompt; but it is the unforgiving nature of that man which I know, and the harm he would do me throughout the rest of my life."

"You need not fear. It suited our friend to employ you to make inquiries respecting a certain portion of my family history; it suited me to pay you to issue a second edition of your discoveries for my especial behoof. I am not likely to see much of Mr. D., as you call him, for some time to come, and I certainly should not think of saying anything which would render your position with him less confidential than it is. And now I don't think I need detain you any longer."

Business being thus pronounced to be at an end, Mr. Gillman thought himself at liberty to drink the ale, which he did at one long draught, and putting on a very shiny and napless hat, took his leave of his patron and departed.

"That was ten pounds well spent," said Philip Vane, as he started on his return to town in the hansom cab which had brought him down, and had been waiting for him some little distance up the road. "The information picked up by that fellow completely coincides with what flashed into my mind about Madge, directly her name was mentioned by the parson at Springside. Springside—how curiously that place has become associated with me! First, in connexion with that old Heriot, and now with Madge. Bah!" he continued, repressing a shudder, "I hate to think of that business. So long as the old man is alive, the merest allusion to him, to the place where he lives, or to the infernal company, sends a shiver through me. If Asprey had not given such an account of him, I would never—there, it's no use dwelling on that. It is easy enough now to understand how this parson had established such an influence over Madge as to induce her to confide that neat little episode in her life to him. It seems that he obtained for her the position by which she was enabled to make her living; so there is no wonder in her being grateful and confiding, and all that sort of thing. Now, my course is pretty plain before me. There are three persons possessed of information, by disclosing which they could, if they chose, prevent my marriage, or annul it after it had taken place, and get me two years' hard labour. One of these, and the most dangerous, is Delabole; but I have squared him, and closed his mouth by—doing what he wished. The other two are Madge and the parson. And of these, I look upon Madge as far the most important. When the parson confronted me the other day, he was evidently acting on Madge's behalf, not, I should say, under instructions from her, but in that sort of chivalrous spirit which influences such men. Any appeal I make must be made to Madge direct, and must not come through him. He would not hear of any compromise, and it would be impossible for him in his position not to take notice of a direct infraction of the law. He is but a poor creature mentally, if one may judge from the manner in which he was hoodwinked by my sudden penitence on the only occasion of our meeting. When I go to Springside to-morrow, my first inquiry must be for him. I must ask him where Madge is to be found, leading him to think that I am thoroughly sorry for having been a naughty boy, and wish to come back to her and to live happy ever after. When I find out where Madge is, and get her by herself out of Mr. Drage's range, there will not, I think, be much difficulty in dealing with her. Whatever affection she may have had for me—and there is no doubt she was deuced fond of me at one time—must have passed away, so that will be no obstacle to her going abroad. She was always ambitious, and if I agree to give her a handsome allowance, or the money down—that's a better plan—and she hears that she can live in luxury and comfort, on condition that she does not allow herself to be betrayed in making any more confidences such as she made to her clerical friend, and keeps herself thoroughly to herself, I think there is very little doubt that she will agree. At all events, as Mrs. Bendixen is within a very few days to become Mrs. Philip Vane, it is quite time some steps were taken in regard to the lady who now holds that title."

The autumnal sun, without much warmth in it to be sure, but doing its best to make things look bright and cheerful, was shining over Springside in the early afternoon of the next day, and tempting the strongest

of the invalids, who had made it their head-quarters for the winter, into the streets. There was a little more excitement than usual in Springside, for it was "mail morning," and nearly all the inhabitants of the Indian colony there located had received letters, the generally interesting news of which they were anxious to discuss with their common friends. On such occasions the club was certain to be filled, and it was incumbent on every Springside settler to take down his budget of gossip and contribute it to the general stock.

Captain Cleethorpe, in whom long years of home residence had not in the least cooled his love for the East and his interest in Indian affairs, had long taken the lead in the discussions which cropped up on such occasions. But when Sir Geoffry Heriot joined the colony, the captain, with a good grace, yielded to his senior officer the position which the latter's age, experience, and clear-headed common sense enabled him to hold against all comers. Indeed, after a very short time, the old general's impetuosity of manner, and sharp caustic style of conversation, grew to be so much relished, that the chance of his attendance at the club was held up as an attraction, and many an invalid, whom nothing else would ever have induced to venture out, wrapped himself in wondrous mufflers, and braved the night air, on the chance of hearing "old Heriot tackle a griff."

The news that the old general was seriously ill had spread a gloom over this day's meeting, and even those who had been most opposed to him in argument on social and political questions joined in lamenting his absence and its cause, acknowledging, as they did, that, though censorious and irritating, he was always a perfectly honourable and gentlemanly opponent. True it was that the arrival of Captain Cleethorpe, who had come straight from Wheatcroft, with the news that there was a decided improvement in Sir Geoffry's condition that day, had a cheering influence on the assemblage. But the old man's absence was most noticeable; a dozen occasions arose on which, as it was felt by most present, he would have dashed in with some trenchant remarks, which would have had the effect of changing the whole line of the argument. On Captain Cleethorpe, especially, this feeling fell with fullest force; he owned to himself that he was dull and dispirited, and impressed with a consciousness of an impending something which he could not explain. He was glad that he had brought the mare into town. Instead of going straight home to the Bungalow, he would take a stiffish ride round the country in the hope of thus driving away this attack of low spirits.

So the captain, admirably got up after his neat, trim, soldierly fashion, and looking infinitely better and sounder than many a youngster of half his age, went riding through the streets, jauntily returning the salutations which showered upon him from right and left. He had passed the boundary of the town, and was crossing the road near a little sub-station of the railway, within some three miles of the principal terminus, when a man, suddenly emerging from the narrow lane leading to the station, caused the mare to swerve, and her owner to be grateful for the possession of an excellent cavalry seat. It did not take the captain an instant to recover himself, and as he patted the mare's neck and soothed her, he looked round for the cause of the commotion.

This was a tall, bright-looking young man, well set up, and of springy, active step, who advanced towards the horseman, and was raising his hat, apparently about to apologise for the disturbance which he had involuntarily created. As soon, however, as he approached near enough to discern the features of the gentleman whom he was about to address, he hesitated, stopped, and then, without saying a word, pulled his hat over his eyes and strode rapidly away.

The captain gazed after him in extreme wonderment, not unmixed with disgust. He was very punctilious in his notions of breeding and behaviour, and though there had been no necessity for an apology, yet for the young man to come forward merely to scowl and disappear, was a breach of manners of which Captain Cleethorpe did not at all approve.

"The man must be mad," Cleethorpe muttered to himself, looking after the rapidly retreating figure, "or what on earth can have induced him to rush away like that, as soon as he recognised me? For he did recognise me, I am sure of that, and that was the cause of his trouble. Couldn't be one of my quarter-sessions friends? That young fellow was too well-looking, too frank and bright for a jail-bird. Too — stay — where have I seen that face before? somewhere, I'll be sworn. That expression of pain and trouble which flitted across it for an instant seemed quite familiar to me. Now let me think this out quietly."

And the captain turned round easily in his saddle, and checking the mare to a walk, fell into a train of reflection which lasted some little time. At last he seemed to find the sought for clue, he raised his head, brought his whip-hand down upon his thigh with a smack that startled the mare into a canter, and never drew rein until he overtook a lady walking along the road, who, turning quickly round as Captain Cleethorpe pulled up beside her, proved to be Mrs. Pickering.

"The very person of all others I most wished to see," said the captain, raising his hat. "Will you permit me, my dear Mrs. Pickering, to walk beside you for a short distance, for I have something of real importance to talk to you about."

As he spoke he jumped nimbly from the saddle, and hanging the bridle over his arm, commenced walking by her side.

"Your manner is somewhat alarming, Captain Cleethorpe," said Madge, with a sad smile. "I trust you have no further bad news to tell me of. Sir Geoffry's illness is about as much as we can bear just now."

"No, I won't say bad news, but something odd and strange has happened which you ought to hear of. You recollect your asking me some time ago whether our old friend Sir Geoffry had any family?"

"Yes! yes!"

"And my mentioning that he had a boy who had—who had—in point of fact gone to grief? Well, Mrs. Pickering, that boy, now grown into a young man, I saw not ten minutes ago."

"Here?" said Madge, faintly. "You saw him here in this place?"

"Here!" repeated the captain, "coming down from the railway close by Abbott's Farm."

"Oh, Captain Cleethorpe!" cried Madge, laying her hand upon his arm, "would you mind riding back and seeing if you can overtake this young man? He is doubtless down here with the intention of seeing his father, and it is all-important that any meeting between them should be prevented, at all events just now. You will help me in trying to stop this?"

"My dear Mrs. Pickering, I would do anything in the world to serve you or Sir Geoffry, only I should like to know——"

"Don't wait an instant now, you shall know all some other time."

And the captain raised his hat in adieu, jumped on to the mare, and cantered off.

"No, sir, Mr. Drage has not returned," said the neat little maid to a stranger, inquiring somewhat later on the same afternoon at the rectory gate. "I'm not sure, sir, but I think he's gone up to Wheatcroft."

"Wheatcroft, eh?" said the stranger. "Sir Geoffry Heriot's place, isn't it?"

"Yes, if you please, sir," said the little maid, half awed, half fascinated by the great black beard and brilliant teeth on which she was gazing. "Sir Geoffry's much better to-day, sir, and I heard Mr. Drage say he should go up and have a chat with him."

"Thank you; good day," said the stranger, turning away. "Much better is he? That's not good hearing. However, I suppose Asprey could not be wrong in his diagnosis, and this sudden improvement in the old gentleman is but one of those flashes which so frequently precede total extinction. What a confounded nuisance that this parson should be away from home just when I wanted him. I must see him, for I must learn from him where to find Madge. He is probably the only person who could give me that information, and even if she were still in this place, which I very much doubt, it would not do for me to be poking about and asking questions which might elicit unpleasant inquiries. The old gentleman would not be up to much conversation, and I should think that he and Drage must have had it all out by this time. I'll walk up towards Wheatcroft and meet the parson on his way back."

So Mr. Philip Vane, for it was he, strode leisurely away. The rectory was situate in the outskirts of the town, and on that autumnal evening there were few chance passers-by. Yet Mr. Philip Vane thought it advisable to diverge from the high road, and climbing a gate to proceed along a narrow-beaten track on the other side of the edge, keeping at the same time a sharp look-out for the person whom he expected to meet. He was annoyed when he found himself getting close to Wheatcroft, without having seen any sign of Mr. Drage. The train by which he was to return to London would start in an hour, and unless he made good use of his time now, his expedition would have been in vain. He thought he would go up to the house, where Mr. Drage had probably been detained. There was no chance of his seeing Sir Geoffry, who would doubtless be confined to his room, nor was it probable that any of the servants, even if they saw him, would recognise him in the dusk.

He leaped a light fence, which separated

the field he had been traversing from the Wheatcroft grounds, and passing through a young and struggling plantation, came upon the lawn in front of the house. The blinds were all down, and no light shone from any window. All was dull, and blank, and deathlike. Philip Vane shrugged his shoulders, and muttering, "Cheerful this" to himself, stole quietly round the angle of the house.

In an instant he found himself in the full blaze of a moderator-lamp standing on a table in the window. In an instant he heard a thin, querulous voice call out:

"Hallo, you sir! Come here!"

Philip Vane looked up and saw Sir Geoffry Heriot sitting in an easy-chair by the French window, one-half of which was open. The old man's face was very pale, but his eyes were blazing, and his outstretched hand trembled visibly.

"Hallo, you sir! Come here," he repeated.

"What's the matter, Sir Geoffry?" said Vane, stepping into the room. "You must have forgotten whom you are addressing, by your tone."

"Not at all, I know who you are, and I am glad you have come, for you have saved me the trouble of sending for you."

"Sending for me? Did you want me, Sir Geoffry?"

"Not I, sir, but the police, whom I was about to instruct to arrest you."

"The police! You're an old man, Sir Geoffry, and an invalid, but if you recover you shall answer for this insult."

"Not I, sir; no code will compel me to go out with a swindler and a forger! Here is Irving's letter, here—no, you shall not escape if I can only reach the bell."

Weak and shattered as he was, the old man staggered from his seat and threw himself upon Vane, who had turned to the open window. The remains of those nerves of steel, which had gained him so much renown in the old days, and enabled him to undergo so many hardships, had not entirely deserted Sir Geoffry, for his grasp was riveted on his antagonist, and Vane found it impossible to shake it off. Twice Vane struck the upturned face with his clenched fist, until it was streaming with blood; but the old man still held on. At length Vane, freeing one hand, seized Sir Geoffry's loose neckcloth and twisted it round and round. At the first motion of his wrist the old man's strength suddenly relaxed, and with a groan he fell backwards.

Shaking himself free, Vane darted towards the window, but recoiled in horror as he saw his wife standing in the open air, and looking on with terror-stricken eyes.

His hesitation, however, was but for an instant, and he rushed straight at the window, pushing Madge aside and flinging her to the ground with stunning force, and tore across the lawn to the point at which he had entered the plantation. So far no one had followed him. While crossing the lawn he had seen the dim outline of a figure making its way up the carriage sweep; but it had taken no notice of him, and probably, indeed, not seen him. So far, then, he was safe.

The man whom Philip Vane had noticed in the carriage sweep strode steadily on until he reached the plateau on which the house stood, when he paused and looked round. The flood of light from the open window attracted his attention, and he crept towards it. Suddenly he came upon the prostrate figure of a woman, and looking beyond saw a sight calculated to frighten a stouter heart than his. Springing into the room, he gently raised Sir Geoffry's body in his arms, and was about to attempt to lay it on the couch, when the door behind him was thrown open. He heard the shouting of men and the screaming of women, felt himself suddenly pinioned, and a strong rough hand at his neck. The lamp had been overturned in the hubbub, but some of the servants had candles with them, and one of the men called for a light to look at the ruffian. But after he had raised the candle up to his captive's face, he let it drop to the ground, as he cried in heart-piercing tones:

"Ah, wirra, wirra, Masther George!"

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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XVI. MRS. LEE INSISTS UPON TELLING HER STORY.

May soon found herself domesticated pleasantly enough with the inmates of the Castle of Camlough. Just at first she felt somewhat oppressed by attentions; from Lady Archbold, who prided herself on being an excellent hostess; from Sir John, who was desirous that his special guest should not find herself neglected; from Mrs. Lee, who looked upon this girl as a windfall which Fate had sent to herself; from Katherine, who was resolved to dazzle and to patronise; and from Christopher, who was but bent upon pleasing his love. May accepted the treatment as quietly as though she had been used to it all her life, but once or twice she got tired of being asked if she were sure she would rather go out than remain in-doors, if she were quite sure she would not like this chair better than that sofa, and if she were very sure indeed that she would not prefer another game of chess before going to bed. It crossed her mind that things were pleasanter at home at Monasterlea, where people came and went as they liked, without questioning or ceremony. Very soon, however, she fitted herself to the place; and the people got used to her, and gave her peace.

The castle was built in wings, which formed three sides of a square, enclosing a flowery court-yard, with a fountain in the middle. The wide slanting steps up to the entrance were flanked by a balustrading round which the cactus twined and burned, as strong and as brilliant as though it had been in a hot-house. The wings of the house were each finished by an ivied turret, and all the lower windows peeped out of a thick mat of ivy. On the outer side of the wings a massive balcony, the favourite lounging place of the people of the castle, ran round the upper windows, commanding a charming view of down-hill gardens with a river at their foot, a rustic bridge, a mazy glen, a misty wooded hollow lying deep under the shadow of the rising of the mountains.

Mrs. Lee had taken possession of May as her own property since their first meeting on the mountain. She had chosen her a place by her own side at the dinner-table, chiefly addressed her conversation to her, and after dinner, until the moment when she, Mrs. Lee, fell asleep in her easy-chair, related to her the principal events of her life. Mrs. Lee in the drawing-room was not so alarming a person as Mrs. Lee lost on the heather, but in a brown velvet robe and scarlet turban, she looked sufficiently imposing. Her sad looks at her son, and her bitter looks at Katherine, caused much amusement to May, who did not pity her in the least. If a mother could not be content with a bride like Miss Archbold for her son, why a mother ought not to be encouraged in her folly.

Some days passed before the storm of Mrs. Lee's full confidence broke, as had been threatened, upon May's devoted head. She had several times seen it coming, but had taken timely shelter under the wing of some third person. Mrs. Lee required leisure and privacy for her story, and though the people of the house could hardly be said to do anything all day, nor yet to be particularly sociable, still in their habits within doors there was little privacy or

leisure at Camlough. May was invited to join the lovers in all their walks and rides, and it often fell to her share to feel herself one too many. She learned a trick of letting her horse lag behind the others, and of losing herself in the dingles in quest of wild strawberries. Sometimes Sir John Archbold made a fourth in the rides, and paid her old-fashioned compliments, and told her of the new improvements which he meant to make about the place; a rustic bridge here, a plantation there; and May cheerfully studied the points of view, and faithfully gave him her opinion on these matters. But quite as often she was entirely left to her own reflections. This did not trouble her, for she had a vast love of beauty and a turn for noting character, and the new images that crowded her own mind made a constant entertainment for her from morning till night. The lovers were an unfailing source of delight to her. Her heart leaned towards them in quite a motherly fashion. She had read about lovers, but she had never beheld a real pair before. She followed in their wake, admiring, in her simplicity, what she conceived to be an example of the greatest happiness of life. She spent long dreamy days, thinking over the matter, down among the lilies and sedges under the bridge, or wandering through mazy and shimmering dingles. The world was very glorious, thought May, in her maiden meditation, and human life was very beautiful, and richly blest.

Mrs. Lee and May and Katherine were all lodged in the same wing of the castle. Their windows all opened out upon the great balcony. May was rather afraid to trust herself on the balcony alone, lest Mrs. Lee should loom forth and take possession of her. Mrs. Lee had a handsome sitting-room off her bedroom, and it often pleased her to spend the day in its solitude. May, a less important person, had only a pretty little dressing-room, furnished with writing-table, books, and pictures; but she, too, liked to spend an hour in her retreat. This sitting-room and this dressing-room adjoined one another, the wall between being but a partition. When Mrs. Lee heard May stirring in her nest, she was apt to leave her own and come knocking at May's door. When May heard Mrs. Lee leave her room, she was apt to fly to the balcony, and thence escape to the gardens. Upon the strength of many disappointments Mrs. Lee built a theory that the dressing-room was haunted. "My dear ma'am," she would confide to May, "I heard some one move in it quite plainly; but when I entered there was nobody to be seen!" And May would answer slyly, "Indeed, madam, I don't believe it is haunted by anything more mischievous than myself!"

This was all very well, and for a time she kept the ponderous lady at a distance. The hour of her defeat was at hand, however, and one night she heard Mrs. Lee's gentle knock upon her bedroom door. For a moment May thought of making no answer, and pretending to be asleep. But "it would be quite useless," she decided the next moment, "for she would come in and wake me, I believe!"

"Mrs. Lee, I am just stepping into bed," was her answer. It was certainly true, for she had put out her light, and stood in her night-dress, in the moonlight, in the middle of the floor.

"My dear Miss May," came back to her through the keyhole, "you will not object to an old woman's sitting at your bedside for an hour?"

May saw that she was conquered. She opened her door and retreated to her bed, where Mrs. Lee followed her, and sat down before her like a nightmare. Mrs. Lee had on a large white nightcap, and even the moonlight had no power to make her look like a spirit of night or mysterious angel visitant.

"My dear," began Mrs. Lee, "I should not torment you with my complaints if I had any one else to go to for sympathy."

This was said in an accent of such real sadness that May gave up her impatience and became attentive.

"I'm very sorry if you are in trouble, Mrs. Lee," she said.

"Thank you, my dear," said Mrs. Lee, "and truly I am in sore trouble. Love has always been a mischief-maker, they say, but young men used sometimes to take advice from their mothers. My son used, but now he will not listen to a word that I speak. My dear, I want you to say a few words to the lady."

In the earnestness of Mrs. Lee's affliction she had forgotten the formality of her usual style of address. May's patience, however, was not proof against this speech. She sat up and spoke out her mind.

"Now, Mrs. Lee, I should like to show respect to all you say; but I find it very hard to pity what you seem to feel. I think nothing could be more fitting than the match, and as for your son, I think Miss Archbold only too good for him, if there be any difference between them."

"That's what she thinks herself, I dare say," said Mrs. Lee, beginning to weep; "and I do declare I believe there is no kind-heartedness left among young women now-a-days. But if she does think so, why does she not tell him so and send him away?"

"Send him away!" echoed May; "I don't understand you at all, Mrs. Lee."

"I see that plain enough, my dear, and I will tell you all about it. You think that Miss Archbold is going to marry my son?"

"Of course I think so," said May. "What else could I think?"

"What else, indeed? But she is not going to marry him, and she is going to ruin him for life."

"Oh no, I could not believe it."

"That will not alter the matter at all," said Mrs. Lee, crossly.

"That is true, but I mean—you know even were she capable——" May paused. "In that case, Mrs. Lee, she would not be worth thinking of. Your son would not be ruined for life, I dare say."

"You know nothing about the matter when you say so," retorted the distressed lady. "My dear ma'am, I came here to tell you the whole story. I suppose you have heard my son spoken of as a man of wealth?"

May admitted that she had heard him so spoken of.

"Well," said Mrs. Lee, grimly, "I have three hundred a year which my husband left me. It was all he had to leave. And he said, 'The child is a boy; let him work.'"

May was silent, not daring to ask if upon the reversion of his mother's three hundred pounds a year rested Christopher's sole claim to be considered a man of wealth.

"And so he should have been brought up to work, and he would have worked," went on Mrs. Lee, "if I had not had a brother who was a rich bachelor. He was an old man, and all his great wealth had never made him happy. He had been always called a woman-hater, but when he was dying he sent for me, and he made me some confession about his views of life. He said he believed a single life led to all sorts of folly and wickedness, and that he had been a miserable man because he had been so lonely. He had willed all his fortune to my son, on condition that he should marry before he was twenty-three. 'If a young man has any good in him,' said he, 'he has always fallen in love with some nice girl before that age. Let him marry her at once, and not wait till he has begun to think that she is not as handsome, or as clever, or as angelically tempered as he would like her to be. Most young men are prevented by want of money. He shall not be so prevented.' In this humour my brother made his will, and so, my dear ma'am, it happens that if Christopher be a married man before the last day of next September, he will be richer than most men in the kingdom. If he be not married by that time he will be poorer than any other poor young man by just this much, that he will not know how to work."

"And this is July," said May; "they ought to be getting ready for the wedding."

"There will be no wedding here," said the troubled lady.

"Oh, Mrs. Lee!"

"There is no wedding thought of, except in my son's poor bedazzled brains. I told you before that it was this girl's amusement to lead him on to his ruin. And I tell you so again."

"But does she know the circumstances, as you have told them to me?"

"I told them to her myself seven or eight months ago. She only laughed and said the old gentleman had made an exceedingly awkward arrangement."

"Perhaps she does not like to be tormented about the matter. She may choose to be a little mischievous, but I will not believe that she can be so wicked as you think."

"You don't know her as I know her. You have not seen her with other lovers around her, my dear. She was the centre of a crowd of them when we met her first, and she turned them off one by one, and seemed to delight in their vexation. At that time I thought Christopher would have married a sweet little girl, the daughter of his tutor in England. She was fond of him I am sure, and though she had not a penny, he need not care for that. But this Katherine put her clear out of his head."

"Would it not be well to appeal to her father and mother—I mean Sir John and Lady Archbold?" said May, now thoroughly roused to comprehend the situation, and feel interested in averting this threatened danger.

"I tried that before," said Mrs. Lee, gloomily, "but I might have saved my pains. I believe they are afraid to interfere with the

girl. They declared politely that they never could think of influencing their daughter's affections. As if I wanted them to do so! I asked for nothing but that she should make up her mind."

May began to share in the poor lady's dismay.

"So then I should have left this place in anger," said Mrs. Lee, "only for fear of making a quarrel, and destroying any hope that might be left. If the lady would marry my son I should be thankful, though, indeed, I do not like her. My poor boy loves her, and at all events his fortune would be secured. But if she turns him away now at the last moment, when he finds himself ruined and disappointed, he will fall into a despair which she with her light ways could scarcely even dream of. And things are no better to-day than they were weeks ago."

This conversation went on for some time longer, and during the course of it much of the heaviness and unsightliness of Mrs. Lee's outlines became softened away, and was never after visible to May's pitying eyes. These two new friends parted at last with an understanding that May should—if opportunity offered, make interest for Christopher, and plead his cause with Katherine. And after Mrs. Lee had gone away, May lay a long time still awake, wondering over the iniquity that had just been made known to her. She found it in the end too monstrous to be believed in.

Before she went to sleep she had persuaded herself that Katherine must come forth, triumphant in honesty, from under the cloud of this suspicion which was at present hanging over her.

CHAPTER XVII. KATHERINE SPEAKS HER MIND.

It was not long before May had an opportunity of learning Katherine's sentiments towards Christopher, as well as towards some other people and things.

One morning she was entertaining herself after her own fashion, alone, in the dingle beyond the rustic bridge over the stream. She was sitting in the shelter of a large oak, stringing the ripe rowan-berries into a long scarlet chain. So occupied she heard a rapid step, and a muttering voice coming over the little bridge, a crunching in the underwood close by, and then some one fell prone upon the moss at the foot of her tree; the other side of the tree at which she was sitting. This was Christopher Lee, in deep distress. He had broken the stately, fan-shaped ferns by the recklessness with which he had flung himself down. His face was buried in the grass, and he was sobbing; and May could not move to go away and leave him, for the reason that he was lying upon her muslin skirt. She tried to draw it away without disturbing him, but this was impossible. He started at the movement and looked up.

"Oh, Mr. Lee, I am so sorry!" said May; "I could not help being here!"

He looked at her angrily for a moment, with a burning blush on his perturbed face. Then he laughed uncomfortably, and begged her pardon.

"I see I have spoiled your dress," he said, "but, of course, I did not do it intentionally. Of course, if I had seen you I should not have come here."

"It was very unlucky," said May, "at least if you mind it. But my dress has got no harm."

"Mind it?" he said. "Of course I mind that you should have caught me lamenting like a woman. But I trust myself to your charity; and believe me I have reason for grief. At least I think I have," he added slowly, passing his hand over his face. "I may be foolishly wrong, and if so I will come and tell you, some day soon, of my happiness. I dare not describe to you what that happiness would be like. But I think that I have reason for grief."

"I hope with all my heart that you are wrong," said May, "and that you may get your happiness. If you don't——"

"Well, if I don't?"

"I was going to say something which I had better not say," said May. "You would perhaps think me impertinent and interfering."

"Perhaps I should," said Christopher, reflecting, "and that would be unfair. I will not ask you to say another word. Good morning, Miss Mourne; I am going a little further down the stream to fish."

And so he walked off, forgetting that, in order to fish, it is necessary to have a rod, or some other apparatus for the purpose. But May was a gentle critic, and would not have laughed at him for the world.

After that May dropped her brilliant chain from the bridge, and watched it floating down the stream. Then she turned away, and walked up the hilly garden towards the castle. Katherine was leaning over the balcony, alone. She had been looking down towards the dingle and could see a long way. May mounted the balcony and approached her, seeing that, as she

drew near, Katherine looked expectant, and ready for conversation. This was unusual, but it was what May desired. She was too much disturbed by the mistakes of her neighbours to be at peace with her own thoughts. She was full of indignation against somebody. Who that somebody might be it behoved her to find out, that she might not in the zeal of her fancy make a martyr of the innocent.

"Stay here a little," said Katherine, winningly, as May hesitated, not knowing whether to pass her or remain unbidden at her side. And May seated herself on the edge of the balcony, leaning back against an urn full of geraniums; folded her hands in her lap, and expected to be catechised.

"You have been walking with Mr. Lee?" said Katherine, not rudely, but with the air of one who considered she had a right to ask questions. "Where have you left him?"

"He said he would go further up the river to fish," said May, demurely.

"Oh!" Katherine looked surprised and a little disappointed. She had perhaps expected some pitiful tale of her lover's desperation.

"You were walking with him some time?" she asked again, after a minute, during which she had been eyeing May, who sat with her dark head against the geraniums, her eyes half shut, gazing drowsily down through the sunshine to the river, the way by which Christopher had gone.

"Not walking," said May; "sitting and standing."

"Oh!" said Katherine, impatiently, "and talking, of course. He was complaining to you of me all the time?"

"No," said May, mischievously, "we never even mentioned your name."

"I am glad to hear it, I am sure," said Katherine, with a mortified smile. "But I had thought it might be otherwise, knowing his habit. He is a dreadfully low-spirited young man. I am tired to death of him. I wish they would go away."

"Then why do you not tell him so, and send him away at once?" asked May, rousing up so suddenly, and speaking with such energy that she quite startled Katherine. "You know—you know it is you who keep him here."

May trembled while she spoke, believing that Katherine would think her interference quite outrageous. But Katherine's uneasiness all vanished at the attack. Her face kindled with smiles.

"My dear little girl," she said, indulgently, "you don't know what you are saying. Lovers will not be shaken off so easily. I speak from much experience. While you—you have never had a lover, have you?" said she, looking at May, keenly.

"No, indeed!" said May, hastily, and blushing a vivid blush, that wandered from her cheeks to her forehead, creeping up even among the little rings of her hair. She felt vexed with herself for blushing, for she knew of no reason why the question should annoy her. And there was Katherine looking on with amused curiosity.

"How red you turn!" said Katherine, who had never blushed, save with anger, in her life. "But you need not be ashamed. It is no reproach at all, living out of the world as you do."

"I am not ashamed," said May, and I do not wish for a lover. But I think I can understand how a man ought to be treated by a woman whom he loves—for whom he is willing to give up everything in the world."

"Do you indeed? So you have studied the matter. Come, now, tell me all about it," said Katherine, looking delighted.

"He ought not to be encouraged, and then left to break his heart," said May, with another subtle quiver of excitement dyeing her cheeks. "Even if——"

"Even if what?" asked Katherine.

"Miss Archbold, I am afraid I shall make you very angry."

"No such thing," said Katherine; "I am accustomed to hear dirges about broken hearts. You are not such an original person as you think. And your enthusiasm about lovers' rights is exceedingly amusing. Go on with that speech which you were afraid would overwhelm me."

"I was going to say your conduct would be cruel to Mr. Lee, even if his fortune as well as his happiness were not so entirely at your mercy."

"So you have picked out that story already," said Katherine, looking right well pleased.

"I picked out nothing," said May, indignantly.

"Well, let that be. We cannot help the truth getting about. But, my simple maiden, how am I to blame if people will make a mess of their family arrangements? If a man chooses to lose a fortune for my sake, how am I to prevent his being so silly? If I had been his mother I should have brought him up better. The world

will talk about it, and will call me a monster. But they ought rather to cry out on him for a fool. As for encouragement, how am I to judge of a lover unless I have proper time? People ought to be capable of taking care of their own affairs. If a person sees a risk, why not turn upon his heel and go another way? Now if a man were to show spirit, and prove manfully rebellious——"

"Well," asked May, "what would happen then?"

"Why then I should think him worth a little pains. I have no mercy on a fool."

"Poor Mr. Lee!" said May. "And have all your lovers been fools, Miss Archbold?"

"All," said Katherine, "or at least I have found it easy to make them fools for the time." Katherine had warmed wonderfully with her subject as she went on. It was evidently one upon which she loved to discourse. "There is just one person," she continued, "whom I have thought worth an effort; for whose sake I could acknowledge that my heart is not made of flint. While such a one lives," here her lip curled, "I have no pity for such simpletons as Christopher Lee!"

"Have you told Mr. Lee of the existence of this person?" asked May, gravely, after some rueful reflections upon Christopher's hard fate.

Katherine laughed gaily. "You amusing little goody!" she said, blithely, "do you think that I also am a fool? I have been frank enough with you, but you don't suppose it is my habit to carry my heart upon my sleeve?"

"Was this person rebellious?" asked May, rushing into another question to avoid the opportunity of declaring what she thought about Miss Archbold, and her habitual line of conduct.

"Not quite," said Katherine, with an air of mystery; "but he looked as if he could be. You will see him, I have no doubt, by-and-bye." Here the young lady suddenly became thoroughly confidential. "The first time we met was on board ship, when we were returning from our travels, quite a short time ago. We were coming from Calais to Dover, and there was a storm, and people were frightened. Everybody behaved like a fool, including mamma and papa, who were both ill. He took care of us all, and, as I had fully expected, he made himself my devoted attendant. Towards the end of the passage the wind fell, and all the stars came out. Nothing could be more favourable to a romantic impression, and we had some hours of charming conversation. Mamma gave him our cards, and he came to us in London. There is no doubt that we shall see him here soon. He belongs to this country, and his history is quite interesting. He has been some years abroad, and is coming to visit his inheritance for the first time. He was reserved about himself, but we heard all his story from a friend of his father's. Mamma does not quite approve of him, for the old man may live a long time, and is not very reputable. Still, he must die. And the nephew will be quite a millionaire."

"*Who* is this gentleman?" asked May, suddenly. "What is his name?"

"Did I not mention? I thought you knew. He is Paul Finiston, handsome and proud, and they say he is a poet. One could see it in his eyes that night on board the ship. He had a way of folding his arms and seeming to forget everything and everybody, himself as well as the rest. This was, of course, when the danger was over, and there was nothing more to be done. It piqued my vanity at first, but I soon saw that though a gentleman, indeed, it was evident that he had not been accustomed to the ways of polite society. It is little things like this that made me say he might be inclined to be rebellious. But dear me, Miss Mourne, how white you are grown!"

"Am I?" said May, "never mind. Tell me something more about Paul Finiston."

"Do you know him?" asked Katherine, sharply.

"I cannot say that," said May, "for I left my Paul Finiston in Dublin a great many years ago. I have no acquaintance with your admirer, Miss Archbold."

"*Your* Paul Finiston?" said Katherine, with a sudden elevation of her handsome chin.

"Forgive me if I speak awkwardly," said May; "I mean the Paul Finiston with whom I had some acquaintance."

This was said with dignity, and Katherine was at a loss how fitly to express her displeasure. But fitly or unfitly, her sense of May's audacity must be made known to the offender.

"And with whom you hope to renew your acquaintance," she said, bluntly, and with a look and a tone that made May again turn pale.

"Do not speak to me like that," said the young girl quickly. "I shall be glad if you will talk upon some other subject."

"But I will not drop the subject," said

Katherine, stormily, her eyes beginning to burn and her face to grow dark. "I will not quit it till we understand each other perfectly. You have drawn from me a confidence."

"Pardon!" said May. "You volunteered it."

"I repeat that you drew it from me," said Katherine, "with your sentimental looks and your sympathetic speeches about lovers. Now I may as well go further. And I warn you not to meddle between me and Paul Finiston!"

"I?" exclaimed May, springing to her feet and standing a little off from Katherine, straight and quivering as a very shaft of fire.

"Yes, you," said Katherine. "You have thought of him as a lover. I saw it in your face when I first mentioned his name."

"It is false," said May, in a low thrilling voice. "How dare you accuse me? You, who know nothing of me!"

But Katherine was not softened by the sight of May's honest indignation as she stood panting before her, her eyes like dark flames, her cheeks redder than the reddest roses round about.

"Your enthusiastic modesty is very pretty," sneered Katherine. "But I am not deceived by it. I see that you——"

But here May suddenly put her fingers in her ears with a childish impulse of passionate impatience. Katherine stood speechless at finding herself treated with such utter disrespect. And before she could find words to express her sense of the indignity, May had turned away and fled through the window into her room.

"But I will not be treated so!" cried Katherine at the window. "Come out, Miss Mourne, for I have not done speaking to you. Or else I shall go in——"

But in the twinkling of an eye the window was locked inside, the shutters closed and barred. And May, having thus ended the battle, sat down upon the floor in the dark, and had a hearty cry.

ANDREW DUCROW.

In the later half of the last century there was born at Bruges a certain Peter Von Ducrow, who, arrived at manhood, earned for himself the title of the Flemish Hercules. He was by profession and by natural endowment a "strong man:" gaining his living by public exhibition of his physical gifts. His performances certainly seem to have been of a prodigious character. He could hold between his teeth, and in such wise lift from the ground, a table upon which had been stationed four or five of his children. Lying upon his back, he could with his hands and feet support a platform upon which stood no less than eighteen grenadiers fully armed and in marching order. From the first Hercules downwards, a peculiar mythical halo has, no doubt, always attended and enhanced the proceedings of the strong. But these exploits, and such as these, are stated to have been duly accomplished by Peter in the ring of Astley's Amphitheatre during the early seasons of that establishment.

For the "strong man" had journeyed to London. Within a week of his arrival, in the year 1793, there was born to him a son, who was christened Andrew. It was afterwards deemed appropriate enough that little Andrew Ducrow should have first drawn breath at the Nag's Head Inn, Southwark.

The child was educated perhaps much as "strong men's" children usually are. Great regard was paid to his muscles; his mind was left to take care of itself. It is the acrobat's creed that reading and writing come by nature; but that the feats of the circle can only result from severe training. At three years old Andrew was set to learn his father's trade. From standing firmly with his feet in a straight line, heel to heel, he proceeded to vaulting, tumbling, dancing on the slack and tight rope—with, by way of relief and recreation, balancing, riding, fencing, and boxing. At the age of seven he was sufficiently accomplished to take part in a fête given at Frogmore, in the presence of George the Third. In the course of the performance, much to the alarm of the spectators, the stage gave way, and the little fellow fell through. The king, much concerned at the accident, was charmed by the fortitude with which the young performer bore his bruises, and the simplicity with which he denied that he had been at all hurt.

"What any man has done or can do, I'll do," old Ducrow was wont to say, "but my boy shall do what no one else can or dare do." He referred, of course, to the feats of his profession. He was the severest of disciplinarians, and regarded failure as a matter quite within the control of the performer. He was himself without fear, and he declined to recognise the existence of such a feeling. "In ninety-nine cases out

of a hundred," he would say, "'I can't' simply means 'I won't.'" Diligent application of the horsewhip he had invariably found to be a most complete cure for timidity. Young Ducrow went through his performances with an understanding that any mistake that he might make, or any accident that might happen, would be promptly followed by bodily chastisement of a most merciless kind. At Edinburgh, when a mere child, he fell from his rope and dislocated his wrist; he continued to dance, however, carrying his balancing-pole in one hand. He fell again and sprained his ankle; but he went through the remainder of his performances on one leg. From the strictness of his early training he acquired the coolness and courage which so distinguished his after-career; and certainly his preceptor set him a good example in the way of hardihood. A critic wrote of Peter Ducrow's daring: "He would have danced on a rope stretched across the crater of Vesuvius during an eruption, or have ridden round the ridge of Ararat in a whirlwind!"

In 1808, young Ducrow was chief equestrian and rope-dancer at Astley's, enjoying a salary of ten pounds per week. Five years later, the Ducrows seceded to the rival establishment, the Royal Circus, in St. George's Fields. Here a stage had been erected, and dramatic entertainments were presented. It was in the part of Florio the dumb boy, in the Dog of Montargis, that Andrew first won applause as a pantomimist. Misfortunes, however, came thickly upon the Royal Circus, bankruptcy afflicted the proprietors, the license was forfeited, and the doors of the theatre were closed. Andrew returned to Astley's for a season, and introduced that serious acting upon horseback for which he afterwards became so famous. Already his classical scene of the Gladiator was an admired performance. His bold riding, personal graces, and mastery of the language of gestures, were attracting great attention.

About this time Peter Ducrow died, leaving his widow and family to the charge of Andrew. Astley's was then under the management of one Davis, whose son was a leading performer in the ring. Andrew finding the rivalry of the manager's son somewhat inconvenient, resolved upon a continental tour. Accompanied by his brothers and sisters, and taking with him his famous trick-horse Jack, he joined Blondell's Cirque Olympique, and made his first appearance in Ghent. Subsequently he visited the chief towns of France. His success was something unprecedented. A tempting offer to share the receipts of the night, after an allowance of three hundred francs for expenses, brought him to Franconi's circus, at Paris. The surpassing merits of the English horseman were speedily recognised, and he secured unbounded popularity. His style was pronounced original, his daring unequalled. He was the first to introduce into the ring an equestrian pageant or entrée, and his performances upon six "bare-backed steeds"—as in his famous scene, the Courier of St. Petersburg—had not previously been attempted.

"Animated, light, and graceful," wrote enthusiastically a Parisian critic, "the English horseman seduces and enchants us by his elegant agility. He absolutely sports with the rules of statics, and gravity has no central point for him. Sometimes like an aërial being you would suppose him ready to take an easy flight. Sometimes stooping over the arena he remains suspended in space, a prodigy of equilibrium. His rapid courser is the pedestal on which he erects every form and assumes every attitude: the Mercury of Phidias, ready to take wing; the Gladiator of admirable proportions; the lover of Flora with Cupid in his arms or disporting in a garland of flowers."

Another critic took up the theme: "To these prodigies of agility and address is united a grace which constitutes their highest merit in the eyes of all who entertain a proper sense of the genuine principles of art, and who know that in feats of dexterity, and even of strength, the chief merit does not lie in the surmounting of difficulty. But what exalts the exercises of M. Ducrow to the honourable rank of the imitative art, are the scenes, I might almost say the dramas, which he performs in mute language. The truth, the animation, all, in short, which comprehends the beauty of pantomime, are rendered still more astonishing by being exhibited, as it were, in the air, and in the midst of that rapid motion which hurries along both the courser and his guide. Here, indeed, the difficulty overcome renders the perfection of talent still more admirable. And M. Ducrow has unfolded a new talent. Having shown himself the most skilful equestrian we have ever seen, a charming dancer and excellent mimic, he has now appeared as a worthy rival of Madame Sacqui, Revel, Forioso, Cabanel, and all the boldest funambulists we ever beheld."

At this time, it may be observed, the

natural laws which govern many of the feats of the circus were not very generally apprehended. Much marvelling attended the fact that the horse, greatly inclining inward as he galloped round, yet did not fall into the ring, and that the horseman, however high he leapt into the air, alighted nevertheless upon his steed's back. Every one now is informed as to those ruling mechanical forces, the centrifugal and the centripetal. And it is common enough knowledge in these times that the motion of the horse is communicated to his rider, and that, leaping, he is propelled forward at the same time as many paces as his horse has advanced. In this way the balls tossed up by the equestrian juggler fall back as certainly into the cups, as though the performance had been presented on firm ground, and not on a moving saddle.

Ducrow quitted Franconi's, the proprietor of an equestrian establishment of his own. He boasted a stud of ten horses; his company consisted chiefly of members of his family. He had married Miss Griffith, a lady rider of rare accomplishments and remarkable beauty. His brother, John Ducrow, was clown to the ring. His sister was a graceful performer, and was afterwards known to fame as Mrs. Broadfoot. He travelled through France, meeting everywhere with extraordinary favour. At Lyons, however, his performances were prohibited for three weeks, owing to an accident which had occurred in his theatre in the course of a military spectacle. One of the soldiers had fired away his ramrod, and fatally wounded a woman in the gallery. Further, the manager of the Royal Theatre, finding his entertainment neglected, threatened to close his doors if Ducrow's displays were persisted in. Matters, however, were accommodated upon Ducrow's consenting to pay one-fifth of his receipts to the Royal Theatre, and to devote one-tenth to the poor. The success of the circus was now greater than ever. By way of counter-attraction, M. Mazurier, the famous man monkey, was engaged at the Royal Theatre. Ducrow forthwith announced that he would perform on horseback, riding at full speed, every feat that Mazurier was accustomed to accomplish on a stationary stage. His benefit attracted an enormous crowd. He was presented with a gold medal by the Duchesse d'Angoulême, and with numberless silver spurs, decorated whips, and sets of harness by his other admirers. After a most prosperous campaign he quitted the city amid a shower of bouquets.

He succeded equally well in other parts of France. "The circus was yesterday crowded to excess," wrote a Nantes paper, L'Ami de la Charte. "M. Ducrow, excited by the presence of a numerous company, surpassed himself. He was more extraordinary, more graceful, more powerful than ever. How expressive and animated his pantomime: how fine his postures! The more one sees M. Ducrow the more one wishes to see him. He absolutely resuscitates Proteus. Without quitting his horse he assumes the air, costume, and gait of six different characters. This scene, which is truly comic, and which he calls the Carnival of Venice, occasions immense laughter."

The spectacle of the Cataract of the Ganges, with its "real horses" and "real water," presented at Drury Lane under Elliston's management, in 1823, proved so remarkable an attraction that it was deemed necessary to produce some similar entertainment at Covent Garden. Accordingly, Ducrow and his horses were engaged to appear in the operatic drama of Cortez, or the Conquest of Mexico. This work, contrived by Mr. Planché, and partly founded on the Indian Emperor of Dryden, is a good specimen of the "horse spectacle," and though it could not vie with the popularity of the famous Cataract, yet obtained considerable applause. The author prided himself on his fidelity to history, and the situations represented: notably, the burning of his fleet by Cortez, and the flight of the magicians at the appearance of the conqueror's cavalry, were exhibitions of a stirring kind. In the following season Elliston engaged Ducrow's stud to appear in a drama called the Enchanted Courser. At the time appointed for the first rehearsal, the horses duly attended, but no Ducrow! A messenger was despatched for him, when it appeared that the extraordinary mistake had been made of engaging the steeds without reference to the services of their master. Much to his chagrin Elliston was now compelled to secure Ducrow, in addition, upon his own terms. The Enchanted Courser did not prove very attractive. The public was perhaps growing weary of seeing the "equestrian drama" on the boards of the patent theatres.

Ducrow now reappeared at Astley's, and soon becoming one of the proprietors of the theatre, commenced a long career of prosperity. Under his rule Astley's rose greatly in popular estimation, and obtained recognition as a fashionable place of enter-

tainment. He secured the favour and patronage of King William the Fourth, who fitted up an arena in the Pavilion at Brighton, in order that Ducrow might there perform in private his more famous feats, and especially the impersonation of antique statues he was accustomed to introduce in his scene of Raphael's Dream.

Unlettered as he was, rarely venturing upon a "speaking part," however small, and indulging always off the stage in the strong language of the stable, Ducrow was yet remarkable for his refined taste as a stage-manager, and his keen eye for pictorial and theatrical effect. He was unequalled as a contriver of spectacles, in arranging scenic illusions, in grouping supernumeraries upon the stage, in combining and contrasting the hues of costumes and draperies. He set poetry of motion above poetry of thought, stir before repose, spangles before speeches. "Action, action, action," was the principle of his management. He was the author of that precious theatrical rule: "Cut the dialect and get to the 'osses." And apparently he did not underrate the intellectuality of his patrons. Critics might condemn his plays as unworthy and illegitimate, but a great public followed him admiringly. Supreme success crowned his labours.

The year 1833 was memorable for the coalition, for a season, of Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres. Both establishments came under the government of the once famous Mr. Alfred Bunn, whose monopoly, as it was called, did not enjoy, however, a very prolonged existence. But as it was part of the manager's plan to stay the system of rivalry and imitation which had long been carried on by the two theatres, he resolved to banish clown and pantaloon for a term from Drury Lane, and in lieu of a Christmas pantomime to produce the grand pageant of St. George and the Dragon. To Ducrow was intrusted the stage arrangement of this spectacle. The part of St. George was allotted to him, and the whole strength of his equestrian establishment was enlisted for the occasion. Mr. Bunn in his book of the Stage, while recognising Ducrow's untiring zeal to perfect the performance of the drama, makes mention of the diverting manner in which he was accustomed to carry out his measures. An instance of this occurred at an early rehearsal of the spectacle. The second act opened with the celebration of the nuptials of the emperor's daughter, the ceremony being interrupted by the entrance of a neatherd, in great dismay, with an announcement that the scourge of Egypt, the dragon, had reappeared upon the coast. Ducrow had instructed the supernumeraries, on hearing this intelligence, to rush terrified to the throne of the monarch for counsel; then to the chancellor, to whom the monarch was supposed to refer them; and lastly, on the advice of the chancellor, to the kindled altar of the gods of Egypt. Over and over again was this incident rehearsed. The supernumeraries could not be induced to give any life or expression to the scene. In a mob they moved to and fro without the slightest indication of the panic that was supposed to be afflicting them. Ducrow, in a state of fury, sprang upon the stage and acted the scene for them, exclaiming the while: "Look here, you fools! You should rush up to the king, that old chap sitting there, and say, 'Look here, old fellow! The dragon has come, and we're in a dreadful mess, and you must get us out of it.' The king says, 'Don't bother me, go to Brougham!'" (Lord Brougham was chancellor at that period.) "You all rush to Brougham. Brougham cries out in a rage, 'What do I know about a dragon? Go to your gods!' And your gods is that lump of tow burning on that bit of timber there!" This wild speech, interspersed with vehement expletives, he accompanied with the most admirable pantomimic action, and ultimately succeeded in imparting to his troop something of his own spirit. St. George proved a great success, and was followed by a similar work, King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. It was acknowledged that the popularity of these spectacles was mainly due to the efforts of Ducrow, and he was made the recipient of various presents and testimonials. Queen Adelaide gave one hundred pounds; Mr. Bunn presented him with gold and silver vases of considerable value; the company of his own amphitheatre bestowed upon him a gold snuff-box, with a suitable inscription; and Count D'Orsay, to complete Ducrow's costume of a Greek chieftain—he performed that character in certain of his scenes—presented him with pistols and dirk mounted in ivory and gold, which had originally belonged to Lord Byron.

If Ducrow was often comical in his speech at rehearsal, it is certain that he was invariably fearless in conduct as well. He asked no member of his company to perform any feat he could not readily himself accomplish. At Astley's he lived in the

private house adjoining the theatre, and would often come upon the stage in his dressing-gown and slippers to supervise the preparations for the performance of the evening. On one occasion a rope-dancer, who was announced to ascend from the stage to the upper gallery, declined to perform the feat, alleging that the rope was insecure. "You're afraid of hurting yourself, I suppose," said Ducrow. "Well, I'm not pretty, and I've nothing to fear. Give me the pole." And, "accoutred as he was," he ascended and descended the rope in safety. After this exploit of his manager in *slippers* the performer could no longer hesitate. But even the practised artists of the theatre are said to have shuddered at the perilous performance of Ducrow. At another time, one of the actors, who was required to drop from a set piece in a scene representing a precipice, hesitated, stating that the fall would endanger his life. Ducrow took his place and quietly *jumped* from the elevation—the difference between jumping and dropping being about six feet.

The cockney method of speech which Ducrow invariably adopted may have been something of an affectation. Mr. Bunn especially mentions the equestrian's general intelligence and keen sense of humour, and certainly his addresses to the public were admirable efforts of their kind. These he is understood to have contrived without assistance from other hands. When Braham, the singer, entered upon his unfortunate speculation at the Colosseum, and at considerable expense engaged the Bedouin Arabs to appear, Ducrow announced that a similar entertainment would be presented at Astley's Theatre by a much larger number of artists. Application was made to the magistrates at Bow-street to restrain the proceedings of Ducrow. Upon this, the following handbill proceeded from Astley's Theatre:

"EXTRAORDINARY EQUESTRIAN AND GYMNASTIC ARAB FEATS! Surpasses anything of the kind ever produced! The public are respectfully informed that these are not the FOUR BLACK MEN who play without their shoes and stockings at the West-end of the town, but upwards of forty British artists that challenge all Europe, for talent, variety, extraordinary feats of manly skill and activity, and who nightly receive thunders of applause from crowded audiences, and do not play to a dozen of daily loungers. The union of talent and Arab spectacles of this establishment does not confine itself to the tumbling of FOUR GREAT UGLY BLACKS, who have been refused an engagement at Astley's because there are so many superior and extraordinary men of our own country nearly starving, and compelled to perform on an open race-course for a penny, whilst those four men can get one hundred pounds per week because they are black and foreigners!

"The reader, no doubt, has witnessed boys running alongside of a coach, doing what is termed cat-in-wheels, and turning fore springs with one hand and then the other, or throwing summersaults from a sandbank. Such is the grand performances of these sauteurs, consisting of three or four blacks who walk on their hands with their NAKED FEET IN THE AIR LIKE TWO BLACK FRYING-PANS. Of course no lady or respectable person can sit and see this!

"These blacks, with the men who take half their money, applied at Bow-street to ask if they could not prevent Astley's from using the word 'Arab exercises,' for that the public went every night and filled Astley's and never came to see them at all! Why, of course, the public are the best judges, and knows the difference between seeing a spectacle in character, produced with splendour, to introduce the talents of the flying man, the equilibrists, elastic tumblers, the antipodeans, jugglers, dancers, men and horses, tableaux, the groups of trained horses, and other novelties! But come see and judge for yourselves, for this is only a small part of Astley's entertainments."

It is needless to say that the public found this invitation quite irresistible, and that Astley's was nightly crowded with admirers of Ducrow's Bedouins of British growth.

Mr. Bunn, narrating the misfortunes of a manager, enlarges upon the miseries attending "the fag-end of the season," owing to the systematic negligence of the performers, and the shameful proceedings of the operatives and mechanics of the establishment. It must be borne in mind that his account refers to a state of things existing some forty years ago. Much reformation has no doubt taken place in the matter, and the experience of the modern manager may be altogether different. Mr. Bunn had mentioned the subject to Ducrow, from whom he received a very graphic account of the conclusion of the campaign at Astley's. "I don't know how you find it," said Ducrow, "but as soon as I announce the last nights of the season, the beggars begin to give themselves airs. I went into the theatre t'other night, and seeing a prime little roasting-

pig on a nice white napkin in the hall, I told some one to take it up-stairs to Mrs. Ducrow. The fellow said it warn't for me, it was for Mr. Roberts. You know who he is? Why, he's the chap as orders the corn for the horses. I'm only the chap as pays for it. So he gets the pigs and I don't. Then those confounded carpenters of mine sneak in of a morning with their hands in their breeches-pockets, doubled up as though they'd got the colic. And at night they march out as upright as grenadiers. Why? 'Cause every one of 'em has got a deal plank at his back up his coat. Then the supernumeraries carry out each of 'em a lump of coal in his hat, and going round the corner, club their priggings together, and make up the best part of a chaldron of it. As to the riders, they come into rehearsal gallows grand, 'cause they've had all the season a precious deal better salary than they were worth; and at night they come in gallows drunk from having had a good dinner for once in their lives; and forgetting that they may want to come back another year, they are as saucy as a bit of Billingsgate." Mr. Bunn confirms the accuracy of this description. "This is about the case with all theatres," he writes; "and while the manager is blamed for all these ill-doings, and most assuredly is the only sufferer by them, the real criminals escape unpunished."

In 1834 Ducrow lost his brother John, the clown. Mrs. Ducrow died in 1836. Two years later Ducrow married Miss Woolford, long a famous equestrian at Astley's. Under the date of the 10th of June, 1838, Mr. Bunn records in his journal: "Dined at Topham's New Hotel at Richmond to celebrate Ducrow's matrimonial honours participated in by Miss Woolford."

On the 8th of June, 1841, Astley's Amphitheatre was totally destroyed by a fire which broke out at five in the morning, and which no exertions could subdue. Ducrow and his family narrowly escaped with their lives; a female servant perished in the ruins. The stud at this time consisted of some fifty horses, two zebras, and a few asses and mules; of these scarcely any were rescued. The total loss was estimated at thirty thousand pounds.

Ducrow was ruined, or believed himself to be so. His mind gave way under the pressure of his misfortunes. He died in the York-road, Lambeth, on the 27th of January following. In his will he left directions that a sum of eight hundred pounds should be expended on a monument to his memory, to be erected in Kensal Green Cemetery. The annual interest arising from two hundred pounds invested in the funds was to be devoted to the purchase of flowers for the adornment of his grave. This monument, one of the most remarkable contained in the cemetery, is a curious Egyptian-looking structure of large size and lavish ornamentation. Plants encircle it, and do something to screen and to relieve its excessive embellishments. The inscription runs: "Within this tomb, erected by genius for the reception of its own remains, are deposited those of Andrew Ducrow, whose death deprived the arts and sciences of an eminent professor and liberal patron; his family of an affectionate husband and father; and the world of an upright man." It is understood that this epitaph was written by the equestrian's widow.

Ducrow has been called the "king of mimics," the "Colossus of equestrians," and other fanciful names. His performances in the ring were noted for their grace, daring, and inventiveness. His pantomime was remarkable for its variety and intensity. He was clearly a mute actor of rare ability, but many of his feats have, of course, now become the ordinary "business" of the modern circus. The repertory of the riders of to-day is greatly indebted to Ducrow's skill and fancy. Whenever an especially attractive act of horsemanship is now presented, the spectator may safely conclude that he has witnessed a faithful following of an example set by Ducrow.

Ducrow was five feet eight inches in height, of fair complexion, and handsome features. Exceedingly muscular and of prodigious strength, his figure was yet graceful in outline and perfectly symmetrical. He was accomplished as a contortionist, and could twist his shapely limbs into the strangest forms. Doctor Barker, lecturing in the School of Surgery at Edinburgh, during a visit of Ducrow to that city, recommended his pupils by all means to see the great equestrian, "as they would then be able to form a judgment of what the human frame was capable of as regards development, position, and distortion." With all his impetuosity of temper and speech, Ducrow was yet thoroughly kind-hearted and liberal. He was held in warm regard by the members of his company. In his profession he was an enthusiast, and spared no labour and outlay to perfect the spectacles and performances he purveyed. The play-

going public never possessed a more untiring servant and caterer for their diversion than they found in this intrepid, illiterate rider and rope-dancer, Andrew Ducrow.

THE LIGHT OF THE HEARTH.

FATHER and children with red wet eyes
Open the cage and the linnet flies:
All the house has been sorrow-rack'd,
And water and food the bird hath lack'd.

Mother sleeps in the churchyard near,
Her seat at the board is empty and drear,
The rose-bush withers at the door,
The kind hand waters it no more.

The spinning-wheel is silent there;
With holes in his stockings the boy doth fare;
The spider spins on the ceiling grey,
No brisk broom brushes it away.

The mother's care was ever blest,
Her busy hands were never at rest;
Father oft was angry and mad,
But now in the ingle he sits, so sad!

Sad he sits by a cheerless fire,
Help from strangers he now must hire;
Much indeed may be bought for gold,
All save the heart that is now so cold.

The busy, blessing, caressing hand,
The face so thoughtful, and sweet, and bland,
For the first last time are loved and known
When the gentle light of the hearth hath flown.

CHRONICLES OF LONDON STREETS.

LEICESTER-SQUARE.

ABOUT 1635, when the Civil War was already brewing, Robert Sydney, Earl of Leicester, built a mansion at the north-east corner of a square plot of "Lammas land," or common, belonging to the poor of St. Martin's parish. The land could not have been very valuable, since the earl only paid three pounds a year for the rent of the field before his house, with the building ground and garden. Other houses soon sprang up, and in 1671 the south side was completed. This Earl of Leicester was the father of Algernon Sydney, the patriot who conspired against Charles the Second; of the handsome Sydney who figures in so many of De Grammont's adventures; and of the Lady Dorothy, the Sacharissa of the poet Waller. Singularly enough, the square, even in those early times, seems to have had an attraction for foreigners, the earl frequently letting his mansion to distinguished strangers. At one time, Colbert, the French Ambassador, resided here, while in Queen Anne's reign Prince Eugène lived in Leicester House, and did his best to prevent peace between England and France. In Leicester House the Queen of Bohemia came to end her troublous life, neglected by a licentious court which had no sympathy with her heroism. Strype, writing in 1720, calls Leicester Fields "a very handsome, large square, enclosed with rails and graced on all sides with good houses, well inhabited and resorted unto by gentry, especially the side towards the north, where the houses are larger, amongst which is Leicester House, the seat of the Earl of Leicester, and the house adjoining to it, inhabited by the Earl of Aylesbury."

In 1718, when the Prince of Wales (afterwards George the Second) had been turned out of St. James's by his irascible father, he bought Leicester House, and started an opposition court. Here his son, the Duke of Cumberland, the hero of Culloden, was born in 1721. In due time the princely mutineer came to the throne, and quarrelling with his son in his turn, Prince Frederick also turned his back on his father and took up his abode in Leicester House with his dancing-master and all those other parasites who aided him to vex and insult his father. It was to Leicester House that the wife of the Earl of Cromarty came with four of her children to intercede for her husband, implicated in the '45 Rebellion. The princess made no reply to the supplicating woman except by bringing in her own children and placing them beside her. Addison's play of Cato was performed in Leicester House by the prince's family; the boy (afterwards George the Third) taking the part of Portius.

That good-natured poet, Gay, was often at Leicester House, and suffered here many indignities. On one occasion, having come to read his tragedy of the Captives to the princess and her ladies, Gay, abashed at the audience he saw assembled, stumbled over a stool, and falling forwards threw down a heavy Japan screen, to his own infinite confusion and the alarm and amusement of the giggling maids of honour. For writing his admirable Fables for the young Duke of Cumberland, Gay was offered the place of gentleman usher to a child princess, a post his pride would not let him accept. "Why," he groans to Pope, "did I not take your advice before my writing Fables for the duke, not to write them, or rather to write them for some young nobleman? It is very, very hard fate. I must get nothing, write for them or against them."

In March, 1751, Frederick, Prince of Wales, died suddenly at Leicester House, from the breaking of an imposthume, which had been caused by the blow of a tennis-ball. No character can be conceived so contemptible as that which is handed down to us of this prince. He was a great

gambler, and the most frivolous of men. He boasted of "nicking Bubb Doddington out of five thousand pounds," and then tried to win popular favour by honouring Pope with a visit, and sending Glover, the author of Leonidas, five hundred pounds. He was a mass of contradictions; affable to the poor, yet detesting his own parents; a faithless husband, yet always praising his wife; desirous of acquiring military glory, yet amusing himself, while Carlisle was being besieged, by bombarding a barley-sugar castle with sweetmeats. With all these faults, the people, when he died, exclaimed, "Oh, that it were but his brother! Oh, that it had been the butcher (Cumberland)!" The butcher's remark upon his brother's death was worthy of him. "It is a great blow to the country, but I hope it will recover in time."

After her husband's death, the princess kept Prince George in great seclusion at Leicester House, under the dominion of the Earl of Bute.

There was blood spilt in Leicester-square in 1698. On the 29th of October in that year, some officers had been drinking at the Greyhound Tavern in the Strand, and a quarrel that there arose ended in a duel in Leicester Fields. The revellers had split into two parties; the notorious Lord Mohun, Lord Warwick, and a Mr. Coote on one side, and on the other Captain James, Captain French, and a Mr. Dockwra; hurrying into sedan-chairs, they were taken to the place of combat. Two duels then took place, one between Captain French and Mr. Coote, the other between Captain James and the Earl of Warwick. Little is known of what first happened, but the result was that Mr. Coote, severely wounded, died soon afterwards, and was carried to the Round House, in St. Martin's-lane. The Earl of Warwick and Lord Mohun were tried in Westminster Hall, before the House of Lords, on the 28th of March, 1699, and the evidence given on the trial is full of curious details, illustrative of the manners of the times.

It appeared that when Mr. Coote was hurrying along in his sedan towards the Fields, he swore at the chairmen, and declared he would run his sword into them if they did not get to the place first. He and Lord Mohun got out of the chairs at the corner of Green-street, "the lower corner of the paved stones going up to Leicester House." When the duel was ended, the chairmen tried to lift the sedan over the rails, but seeing Mr. Coote was dying, and declaring the blood would spoil the chair, refused to meddle any more with him till a hundred pounds was promised them if they would carry him to a surgeon. Still unable to lift the chair containing the dying man, the chairmen then went to the aid of Captain French, who was severely wounded, and took him to a French surgeon's at a bagnio, in Long Acre. There the Earl of Warwick swore at them, and told them to call the next day for their money. When Mr. Coote was examined by the surgeons, they found that he was run through the lungs and the diaphragm.

When the Earl of Warwick and his friends, somewhat sobered by what had happened, met at the bagnio, they examined their swords; the Earl of Warwick's was covered with blood, but yet they all agreed that it was French who had fought Coote. Nevertheless the earl fled that night, and hid himself till parliament met. The two noblemen were acquitted; the earl, claiming "the benefit of clergy," being discharged on the payment of the usual fees. His widow married Addison, who found her, to his cost, high tempered and despotic. It was the son of the duellist who was summoned to Addison's death-bed to see how a Christian should die.

At No. 47, on the west side (from 1761 to his death in 1792), lived Sir Joshua Reynolds. The great painter led a methodical life: he rose early, breakfasted at nine, entered his studio at ten, examined designs, or touched unfinished portraits till eleven, when the knocker began to resound, and titled people to rustle in; he painted till four, then dressed, and gave the evening to society. His beaming spectacles and his ear-trumpet were to be seen often at the club and theatre of those days, and the owner of them was always welcome. Doctor Johnson, Goldsmith, Walpole, Banks, Sterne, Gibbon, almost every one celebrated in those days knocked at the door of No. 47.

Reynolds's pleasant dinner-parties seem to have partaken somewhat of the picnic character—never knives or glasses enough, bad waiting, but good talk. Every one scrambles for himself, and Johnson eats till the veins swell out on his forehead; Goldsmith suggests a reply to an axiom of Johnson's, and is stared at by Boswell; Gibbon talks with learned dignity, and Burke is more eloquent even than usual. Reynolds had his vexations too here, when Barry's moroseness vexed him, and when grand people returned portraits as bad likenesses, or complained of the colour fading. Here he chafed to think of young Lawrence setting up in opposition in the same square,

or fretted at the preference some people had for Romney. With well-bred sitters he was polite and amiable, but when a rich citizen told him once that the pattern of his lace ruffles was obscurely made out, Sir Joshua replied hastily: "That is my manner, sir, that is my manner;" and when a vain lady displayed her taper hands, he said, calmly: "Madam, I commonly paint my hands from my servants."

Half that busy yet tranquil life of Sir Joshua's passed at No. 47, till at last came that sad afternoon, when, finding himself growing blind, he laid down his brush, and said, mournfully, "I know that all things on earth must come to an end, and now I am come to mine."

Nor do we often visit Leicester-square without thinking of the affecting story of Reynolds, almost blind, wandering round the rails, seeking for a pet canary of his that had strayed.

Hogarth lived at the east side of the square, nearly at the south end. In his time a cork gilt head stood over the door. There the little man, with the full round forehead, and the firm mouth, painted all his great pictures; and there, in dreams, the hideous Idle Apprentice and the handsome good one, the Rake, the hangmen, the madmen, the thieves, and all the odd people whom he painted, visited him. From this spot Hogarth sallied to see the Rake married to the rich old maid at Marylebone Church, and to the Adam and Eve to see the Guards stagger by to Finchley. From here he set out for his walk to the quiet New River and to Southwark Fair, with all its noise and merry clamour. From Covent Garden brawls, carefully noted by him, and from executions at Tyburn, Hogarth returned to this square, to think over his pictures. It is difficult to imagine that such nightmare figures as Tom Idle and the wretches of Gin Lane did not perpetually haunt the painter, but we suppose he exorcised them by thoughts of the pleasant faces he could paint when he liked. The pretty actress the rustics are staring at in the Southwark Fair, the compassionate girl who saves the Rake from arrest, are specimens of Hogarth in his happier and more innocent moods. His terrible power of satire, his honest hatred of what was evil, enabled Hogarth to brand more rascals than even Pope, yet without the poet's personal malice.

In Leicester-square this great satirist spent his busy middle life, close to where, in youth, he had been apprenticed to Gamble, the silversmith. He had worked hard before he drew that last sketch, which he called the End of All Things, adding to a series of worn-out and broken things a shattered palette, emblematical of his approaching death.

Next door to Hogarth lived John Hunter, the great surgeon, and here he stored those treasures now in the Royal College of Surgeons. The story goes that when the studious man used to return for a quiet evening's reading, he would often, to his disgust, find the house full of company, and on one occasion, provoked beyond endurance, he is said to have ordered the whole party his wife had invited out of the house.

In St. Martin's-street, on the south side of the square, Sir Isaac Newton lived; the little turret that was his observatory is still to be seen. Doctor Burney afterwards took the house. He was one of Doctor Johnson's steadfast friends, and to his door the giant of literature must have often made his ponderous way. Burney was fond of telling how he attended the first representation of Johnson's tragedy of Irene, and witnessed the public disapprobation. When the heroine was about to be strangled on the stage, the audience cried "Murder." Many stories were circulated at the time, Burney says, of the author's being observed at the representation to be himself dissatisfied with some of the speeches and conduct of the play, and, like La Fontaine, expressing his disapprobation aloud. Quite as a young man, we find Burney so delighted with the Rambler, that he became a subscriber to the Dictionary the moment the great project was announced, and Johnson replied to his letter in the blandest terms. "Your civilities," he wrote, "were offered with too much elegance not to engage attention, and I have too much pleasure in pleasing men like you not to feel very sensibly the distinction which you have bestowed upon me." Burney has preserved some interesting notes of Johnson's conversations, and describes him at Streatham telling Miss Thrale that she should dash away on the harpsichord like Burney. Although the doctor generally talked slightingly of music, Burney upon this said to him, "I believe, sir, we shall make a musician of you at last." Upon which Johnson replied, "Sir, I shall be glad to have a new sense given me." Of Burney's daughter, the authoress of Evelina, Johnson was a great admirer. One day at the Essex-street Club, he boasted that the day before, at Mrs. Garrick's, he had dined with Fanny Burney,

Mrs. Carter, and Mrs. Hannah More, and three such women were not to be found elsewhere. He was, indeed, never tired of flattering and praising Fanny Burney, who keenly appreciated his homage.

One day a lady made Johnson talk of love. The doctor eulogised the tender passion in tremendous phrases. "We must not despise a passion," he thundered, "which he who never felt never was happy, and he who laughs at never deserves to feel; a passion which has caused the change of empires and the loss of worlds; a passion which has inspired heroism and subdued avarice; a passion, in short, that consumes me away for my pretty Fanny (Burney) here, and she is very cruel." One special night at the Burneys the authoress of Evelina has herself described. She paints Johnson as very ill-favoured, tall, stout, and grand in figure, but stooping horribly, his mouth opening and shutting continually, his fingers twirling, his hands twisting, his vast body see-sawing backwards and forwards, his whole great person looking as if it were going to roll itself quite voluntarily from his chair to the floor. Presently, after holding his nose quite close to the keys of the piano while a duet was playing, he strode to the book-shelves, and taking down a book began to read, as if entirely oblivious of every one present. At a subsequent party Miss Burney sketches with much humour the despotic way in which Johnson ordered about Boswell, who was always trying to get near him, with a "What do you do there, sir? Go to the table, sir. What are you thinking of, sir? Why do you get up before the cloth is removed? Come back to your place, sir." Which makes us shrewdly conjecture that Boswell, after all, must have had a hard life of it.

Saville House (north side, some years ago destroyed by fire) was sacked by the mob during those terrible Gordon Riots, in which Barnaby Rudge figured. The men with the blue ribbons hated the proprietor for his supposed anti-Protestant feeling; their expression of dislike was not of the gentlest kind, and unripping beds and demolishing looking-glasses was their only consolation for not burning Sir George Saville's mansion to the ground.

Leicester House, subsequent to its being pulled down, became a show place for a Museum of Natural History, collected by Sir Ashton Lever. Eventually the museum was put up in a lottery, only eight hundred out of thirty-six thousand tickets being sold. For all this it was won by Mr. Parkinson, the proprietor of only two tickets, who afterwards exhibited the collection in Blackfriars. It was eventually offered to the British Museum, but was, after all, sold by auction in 1806. The sale lasted four days, and there were four thousand one hundred and ninety-four lots.

The memories of Hogarth, Reynolds, and Newton form a border of immortelles for Leicester-square, that even its general dinginess and disrepair cannot hide. May we live to see the day when the hideous statue in the centre of weeds and refuse is replaced by some real work of art, and flowers take the place of nettles. At present the square is an eyesore and a disgrace to that quarter of London.

WAXWORK.

Wax once played a more important part in the history of every-day life than it does now. The busy bee made wax and honey centuries ago as at present, neither less nor more cleverly; but there were reasons why those products were more valued in the days of Queen Elizabeth, or of Queen Matilda, than in those of Queen Victoria. When gas-lighting was unknown, when petroleum, paraffine, kerosene, camphine, stearine, and ozokerit had not yet been discovered, society depended on wax for the best lights, and coarse tallow, coarse oil, and torches for common purposes. Then again, mead or honey wine was a favourite beverage in old days, whereas a modern Londoner would scarcely deem it a good substitute for Barclay or Bass: we may approve or disapprove the change of taste, but it certainly leaves us now very little dependent on the bee.

Every one knows what wax is. The bee does not really form or originate this substance. Wax enters into the composition of the pollen of flowers, covers the envelope of the plum and other fruits, and forms a sort of varnish on the surface of many kinds of leaves. Myrtle wax is obtained from the berries of the Myrica cerifica, an American plant; when the berries are boiled in water, the wax exudes, floats on the water, is skimmed off, and remelted. The wax-palm of the Andes, the Ceroxylon Andicola, is a lofty tree yielding a mixture of wax and resin, of which the natives make candles. The wax-tree of Guiana and Brazil yields a resinous juice which is called wax, although it scarcely deserves that name. What we generally know as wax, however, is the product of the bee;

whether the insect elaborates it from the pollen of flowers, or from an animal secretion, we may leave naturalists to determine. The wax is used by the bee to construct the honeycomb. When separated by pressure, melting in hot water, subsidence, and cooling, it presents itself as a softish yellow substance. By subsequent melting, stretching out into a kind of ribbon, and exposure to bleaching agents, it becomes white or bleached wax, more pure than the yellow, and having a somewhat higher melting point. In making this substance into wax candles, several prepared wicks are suspended over a vessel of melted wax, the wax is poured to a sufficient thickness on the wicks by a ladle, and the candles when cooled are made cylindrical and polished by rolling on a smooth table.

Wax lights were indispensable accompaniments to the other adornments of the royal palace, the feudal castle, and the baronial mansion of the olden time. In the Wardrobe Accounts of Edward the Fourth, somewhat less than four centuries ago, there is a curious entry to the following effect: "William Whyte, tallough-chaundeller, for iij dosen and ix lb. of p's candell, for to light when the king's highness and goode grace on a nyght come unto his sayd grete warderobe, and at other divers tymes." From other entries it appears that p's was sometimes spelled peris, sometimes pares, sometimes parys; it is believed that the lights so used were called Paris candles. In that singular forerunner of our modern books of etiquette, called the Boke of Curtasye, written about the same period as the Wardrobe Accounts above adverted to, there is distinct mention of wax candles and Paris candles, but without any notification as to the materials whereof the latter were made:

> In chambre no lyght ther shalle be brent
> But of wax, thereto yf ye take tent:
> In halle at soper schalle candels brenne
> Of Parys, therein that alle men kenne.

Here we are told of wax candles in the chamber and Paris candles in the hall, the former probably more delicate and costly than the latter

The use of lighted wax candles in cathedrals, churches, and religious processions, and in connection with funerals, can be traced back through a long series of ages. There is an old Welsh legend to the effect that wax lights are used on the altar because bees derive their origin from Paradise, and are especially blessed by the Almighty; therefore mass ought not to be performed without the aid of the wax derived from those favoured insects. There are some indications of such a use of wax as far back as the third century; throughout the whole history of the Roman Catholic Church the usage has been maintained. There was at one time in England a due called wax-shot or wax-scot, a gift of wax candles presented to churches three times a year. What were called wax-rolls were pieces or cakes of wax, flat circular discs, presented to churches, for the use of which they were made into candles or tapers, and some other sacred things. It is known that in the Anglo-Saxon times, under Ælfric and Edgar, lights were used on the altar during mass, while others were held in the hands of attendants during the reading of the gospel; and at all times since, the gift of candles, or of wax to make them, was deemed an acceptable religious service.

Several illustrations of this subject are to be met with in Mr. Toulmin Smith's recently published work, an antiquarian book almost as pleasant as a romance. We mean the Original Ordinances of more than One Hundred Early English Gilds. There is a dispute as to whether we should say gild or guild; but this need not detain us here. Very nearly five hundred years ago, a parliament held at Cambridge in the time of Richard the Second ordered that returns should be made to the king in council as to the ordinances, usages, and properties of the English gilds. The returns seem to have been duly made and forwarded; and the original parchments on which many of them were written still remain in the Record Office, where Mr. Toulmin Smith has ferreted them out by dint of great industry and care. Wax candles, or wax to make into candles, are frequently mentioned in the records, sometimes as presentations to churches, abbeys, and convents, sometimes as forfeits or penalties. The Guild of Garlekhith (near the present Garlick-hill) had a rule that all the members should meet four times a year, on pain of forfeiting a pound of wax; and the same forfeiture was imposed on any member who neglected to attend the funeral of a brother or sister of the guild. Many of the guilds, of which this was an example, partook of the nature of our modern friendly societies, but with a marked attention to the inculcation and encouragement of piety and morality. So singularly was the purpose carried out in the Guild of St. Katherine, Aldersgate, that each brother and sister on admittance was to kiss all present, in token of love, charity, and fellowship. Five round tapers of wax, of the weight of twenty

pounds, were to burn on high feast days to the honour of God, of the Virgin Mary, of St. Katherine, and all saints, and to be used to light round the body of a dead brother, and in his funeral procession. The wardens of St. Botolph's Guild, Norwich, stated in their return that they had in hand twenty-six shillings and eightpence for the maintenance of a light. The Guild of St. George, in the same city, had in hand forty shillings for the support of a light and the making of an image. In relation to St. Katherine's Guild, another in old Norwich, "of the chattel of the guild shall there be two candles of wax, of sixteen pounds weight, about the body of the dead," whenever any brother or sister departed this life. The Guild of Young Scholars at Lynn was established chiefly to maintain an image of St. William, standing in a tabernacle in the church of St. Margaret, with six tapers of wax burning on festival days. The Guild of St. Elene at Beverley kept three wax lights burning every Sunday and feast day, in honour of St. Elene; while at the morning mass of Christmas Day thirteen wax lights were burned. There must have been a goodly amount of wax consumed on the Feast of the Purification by the Guild of St. Mary at Beverley; for the brethren got up a pageant, in which two youths representing angels carried a chandelier or compound candlestick, containing twenty-four thick wax lights; and the other members each carried a wax light. In the Guild of the Resurrection of our Lord, at Lincoln, at the funeral rites of a brother, thirteen wax lights were burned in four stands. In the Guild of the Fullers of Lincoln, no member was permitted to teach the craft to a learner unless the latter contributed "twopence to the wax," that is, to the fund for buying wax lights. The Guild of Tailors, of the same city, imposed a fine of a stone of wax for infringement of one of the rules. As wax was sevenpence per pound in those days, representing a manifold higher price now, this fine was certainly a heavy one. In the Guild of St. Katherine, at Stamford, a fine of one pound of wax, plus twopence, was imposed on any member absent from the guild feast; and as the feast itself was valued at twopence per head, the absentee paid for a dinner which he did not eat, besides losing a pound of wax.

The altar use of candles is mentioned by Wordsworth in one of his stanzas:

> Our ancestors within the still domain
> Of vast cathedral or conventual gloom,
> Their vigils kept: where tapers day and night
> On the dim altar burned continuously.

And the Christmas candles, which our boys and girls still delight in, are they not relics of religious usages of old days?

The usages and traditions connected with Candlemas Day are associated with wax through the medium of the candles into which it was fashioned. There is an old Latin proverb to the effect that if the sun shines brilliantly on Candlemas Day, hard frost is coming. It got into English form as a couplet, that after Candlemas Day the frost will be more, if the sun then shines bright, than it has been before. A Norfolk saying tells us that:

> As far as the sun shines on Candlemas Day,
> So far will the snow blow in afore May.

Another is couched in very strong language, stronger, we will hope, than any countryman would really use:

> When Candlemas Day is fine and clear,
> A shepherd would rather see his wife on the bier.

Another, in four-line stanza, goes a little further into the weather-predicting line:

> If Candlemas Day be fair and bright,
> Winter will have another fight;
> But if it be dark, with clouds and rain,
> Winter is gone and will not come again.

Another version, somewhat different in its philosophy, is to the effect that whatever wind blows on Candlemas Day, will continue to blow for the next forty days. Candlemas Day, our almanacks tell us, comes on the 2nd of February, and is the anniversary of the Purification of the Virgin. On this day the Church of Rome directs the blessing of candles by the clergy, the distribution of them among the people, and the carrying of the lighted candles in solemn procession. The pope presides at a great ceremonial of this kind in the chapel of the Quirinal, on Candlemas Day; and minor celebrations take place at other churches. The candle is used symbolically in reference to a passage in the Song of Simeon. Very little notice of Candlemas, or of its origin, is now taken in England, beyond a few country customs and proverbs.

As far as possible removed from the use of wax as a light-giving material, is its employment as an impressionable substance, a material that can be cast into moulds when melted, and impressed with a die or seal when in a semi-molten state. The Greeks were familiar with this use of wax; they adorned their rooms with statuettes, branches, fruit, flowers, and wreaths, made of this substance. We are told that that very unrespectable gentleman, Heliogabalus, liked to tantalise his guests by setting before them dishes of waxen luxuries, so cleverly imitative of the

originals as to deceive all but the initiated. Wax is largely employed in producing imitations of anatomical specimens. One of the palaces at Florence contains thirty rooms filled with coloured wax imitations of parts of the human body, and of vegetable productions. This anatomical use of wax is said to have originated as follows: Nones, of Genoa, a hospital physician, in the seventeenth century, wished to preserve a human body by embalming it; but not being able entirely to prevent putrefaction, he considered whether he could imitate the body in wax. The Abbate Zumbo, of Sicily, imitated the head so perfectly, under the direction of Nones, that many persons believed the coloured wax to be the real head; and this led to the further cultivation of the art by a Frenchman named Delacroix. Anatomical wax preparations were exhibited at Hamburg, by Courège, in 1721; and in 1737 others were publicly sold in London.

Wax images and effigies have been more or less in favour for ages past. The wax effigies of the kings of England were at one time borne in procession at their funerals. There were wax effigies in Westminster Abbey, and at St. Denis, in Paris. There is a curious paper in the Tatler, by Steele, purporting to be an account of a waxwork exhibition in Germany, representing the religions of Christendom. Seven figures were placed in a row, some decked out fantastically; while behind them were other figures moved by clockwork, representing Persecution and Moderation, and so arranged as to play a kind of ecclesiastical drama. Steele describes it as having been a show carried about Germany, but names and places are not mentioned, and we are left to put our own interpretation upon it. The date would correspond very well with the time of Courège just mentioned. Mrs. Salmon's waxwork exhibition was a famous attraction in those days. In Italy beautiful figures in wax were made by Ercole Celli, and by Giovanni and Anna Manzolini. Many fine specimens by these artists are preserved in the museums at Bologna, Turin, Paris, and St. Petersburg. Other famous Italian artists were Calzi, Phillippo, Balugani, Terrini, and Fontana, the last-named of whom employed quite a staff of anatomists, model-cutters, wax-moulders, and painters.

Pinson and Laumonier in France, and Vogt in Germany, were accustomed to illustrate their anatomical lectures by means of wax casts; and the plan has since been extensively followed. Not the least celebrated among artists in wax was Madame Tussaud, who, in the exercise of her art, eighty years ago, lived and worked during the terrible scenes of the great French Revolution. She prepared waxen effigies of the half-savage Marat, of his murderess Charlotte Corday, of the beautiful Princess of Lamballe, of the arch-terrorist Robespierre; and was herself, on one occasion, in imminent peril of the guillotine. After many trials and struggles she settled in London early in the present century, and here she made waxen celebrities for forty or fifty years. The old lady used to sit near the entrance of her exhibition-room to receive her visitors, until at length she died, about twenty years ago, at the advanced age of ninety. Her name is still given to the establishment over which her descendants or representatives now preside; but that is no more than we see in other cases; for who can tell us whether there is still a Day or a Martin at the blacking factory, or a Pickford at Pickford's?

Some of the waxen effigies produced and exhibited are made by modelling, some by casting. In the former case the wax is mixed with white turpentine and lard, forming a substance easily cut and modelled with tools. In making the figures by casting, molten wax is poured into a plaster-of-paris mould; and the mould being then taken to pieces, the wax cast is easily extricated. Sculptors sometimes form their first models in a composition of wax, Burgundy pitch, and lard; it works easily, and is convenient under many circumstances.

Taking an impression in wax is another mode again of using this remarkable substance. Lapidaries, gem cutters, and seal engravers often want to ascertain how their work, whether in intaglio or in cameo, is progessing; they mix some very fine wax with sugar-candy, burnt soot, and turpentine; they warm this mixture, and press the stone or gem upon it, by which a reversed copy of the device is produced. Sealing-wax of the best kind is a misnomer; it is not wax at all, being made of shellac, Venice turpentine, and cinnabar or vermilion; in the black sticks ivory black is substituted for cinnabar. The cheaper kinds are equally without wax, common resin being used instead of shellac, common turpentine instead of Venice turpentine, red lead instead of cinnabar, and lampblack instead of ivory black. How beautifully defined are the impressions carefully taken in good sealing-wax most persons know.

Those who have occasion to pass through

that busy hive of lawyers, law stationers, and law writers, Southampton-buildings, Chancery-lane, may once now and then see a covered cart drawn up at a particular doorway, and hundreds of bright tin boxes removed from the cart into the building to which the doorway leads. The boxes are flat and circular, larger than snuff-boxes, smaller than gentlemen's collar-boxes, say about as large as muffins. These boxes are to contain wax seals, and they are being delivered into the Patent Office, where so much money is spent every year by inventors of new machines and new processes. In the accounts submitted annually to parliament by the Commissioners of Patents is an item of expenditure for seals for letters patent, and another item for boxes to contain the seals. Every letter patent, as the official record of a patented invention is called, is obliged to carry about with it a large yellowish seal three or four inches in diameter, enclosed in a flat circular tin box to prevent it from breaking, and fastened to the parchment by tapes or ribbons. The impression is taken in yellow wax from the Great Seal, and without this impression the patentee's claim would be invalid.

The seals here spoken of are really made of wax, though somewhat coarse in quality, mixed with Venice turpentine or some similar substance. This soft wax for legal seals was formerly used for sealing letters, until the introduction of the harder (miscalled) sealing-wax. At a time when sealing-wax was very costly in England, and before gummed envelopes were in use, an elderly lady, widow of a military officer, eked out a scanty income by begging the seals of old letters from friends and every one she knew, removing fragments, &c., by warm water, melting the wax, and re-making it into sticks.

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER X. ABANDONED.

Two hours after the event just narrated, the household at Wheatcroft began to settle down into something like order again. True that here and there in the passages were still to be seen women gathered together in knots, some weeping, some gesticulating, all talking. True that in the servants' hall a group comprising the gardeners, grooms, and out-door servants of the establishment, partly paralysed with horror, kept their mugs of beer suspended in the air, as they listened to the footman's thrilling narrative of his discovery of the body. True that Mr. Johnson, the butler, had a select audience in the pantry of men of his own standing, well-qualified judges of a bottle of excellent Madeira, which he had thought the solemnity of the occasion warranted him in broaching. But the crowd of townspeople, which immediately on the dreadful news being bruited abroad had come surging up from Springside and spread itself round the house, standing at tip-toe to peer over the hedges, staring up at the windows and over the chimney-pots, as though expectant of some revelation from them, eagerly demanding news in feverish whispers, and charging up to the lodge gates to glare at any one going in or out of them, had dispersed. A large portion of it had followed the fly, which, with the prisoner and superintendent of police, and two constables on the box, had driven away to the old Guildhall: followed it with roars of bitter execration and threats of personal violence; for not only had the dead man been well liked in Springside, but the rumour had got abroad that the murderer was his son—his son, who had always been a prodigal, a black sheep, and a castaway, and who had on more than one occasion threatened his father's life.

In the library, everything remained just as at the time of the struggle. The body, by Doctor Chenoweth's direction, had been placed upon the couch, where it lay, the dull outline of the profile and the projecting feet showing under the white sheet which had been thrown over it. But the overturned table on which the lamp had stood—the lamp itself bent and broken and surrounded with a thousand particles of shattered glass; the window-curtain torn away from its rings, and hanging over in a ragged festoon; the book which the dead man had been reading, and which had dropped from his hand when he first caught sight of his assailant—all these mute, inanimate objects lay just as they were at the time of the struggle. There was confusion and chaos, but there was no stain of blood on the carpet, nor anything to indicate the deadly end of the encounter that had taken place; the disorder might have been the result of some drunken frolic, save for the presence of that awful form which lay still and motionless on the couch, over which hung the picture of what it once had been in the prime of its life and the days of its glory.

It was by Captain Cleethorpe's orders that the room had been left exactly as they found it, and that the door had been locked, not to be opened until the coroner's jury assembled for the inquest. It was with the greatest difficulty that Riley had been induced to obey these orders. The old soldier-servant pleaded in heart-piercing accents to be allowed to remain by the dead body of the master whom in life he had loved so well and served so faithfully. After his first wild shriek of horror and surprise when he recognised the man whom he had seized, the old man became strangely silent. In answer to the eager inquiries of the bystanders, to whom Gerald was unknown, he was compelled to admit that the young man standing there, closely guarded by two grooms whilst the assistance of the police was being summoned, was indeed Sir Geoffry Heriot's son, but more than this he would not say. He kept his back studiously turned upon the prisoner, who, deadly white, and quivering in every limb, yet preserved a certain proud appearance, and gazed fearlessly round, and seeming to ignore everything that was going on, knelt by the side of the body and apostrophised it in simple mournful lamentation. The old man was the last of all to quit the room, and when Mr. Drage gently led him away, he broke from the kind hand that was guiding his tottering footsteps, and rushing to his own chamber, flung himself upon his bed in an agony of grief.

In the dining-room, Captain Cleethorpe and Mr. Drage were seated, one on either side the fire. The fire had been lit for the first time that season, not that the evening was chilly, but rather in the vain hope of doing something to dispel the awful gloom which hung over the entire house; but the wood was damp, and only a thin smoky tongue of flame flickered fitfully in the grate. With the same hope, the butler had placed wine-glasses upon the table, but they remained untouched. Mr. Drage had evidently been unable to control his emotion; there were traces of tears upon his cheeks, his head was bowed down upon his breast, and from time to time a convulsive sob shook his wasted frame. When Captain Cleethorpe was at rest, he sat biting his nether lip and pulling at the ends of his moustache, but every now and then he would rise from his chair, plunge his hands into his pockets, and wander vaguely up and down the room, occasionally pausing to shrug his shoulders and rub his forehead, and then returning to his seat after the same dazed and puzzled air.

The silence, which had lasted for some time, was broken by the captain.

"It is of no use," he said, "it is perfectly impossible for me to realise what has occurred. There was a time when I was accustomed to look upon death in every shape, and when the excitement of my life was so great, that even an occurrence like this would not have struck me with any great amount of wonderment or dismay. But I am growing old I suppose, and the quiet time I have had of it down here for the last few years, has had the effect of robbing me of my pluck. I am as nervous and as weak as——"

"As I am—you were going to say," said the rector.

"On the contrary," said Captain Cleethorpe; "I was perfectly astonished to see how you, in your weak state of health, contrived to have all your senses about you, and to give exactly such orders as should have been given, under the effect of this sudden blow. That poor fellow, Riley, would never have suffered any one else to lead him from the room; and in several other instances your thoughtfulness and presence of mind were invaluable."

"I, too, am accustomed to death, though, of course, not under such fearful circumstances as this," said the rector, quietly. "I have seen more of it recently than you. Perhaps, too, there is something in the fact of my knowing that, notwithstanding the little rally which he made, our poor friend was inevitably doomed; and Doctor Chenoweth had warned me that his stay with us was probably limited to two hours. But the reaction is upon me now, and I feel myself rapidly giving way."

"It seems strange," said Cleethorpe, not heeding the last remark, "that a man whose lease from nature had so nearly expired should die a violent death!"

"It is by no means certain that such was the case."

"What do you mean?" asked Cleethorpe, bending forward with astonishment.

"Simply this," said the rector, adding quietly, "don't mind my shuddering; the mere thought of the thing turns me sick. Chenoweth told me that from the cursory examination he had made of the—of the body, he found no indications of violence sufficient to bring about the fatal result."

"But I myself saw the poor face clotted with blood!" said Captain Cleethorpe.

"True; but this was merely surface blood produced by the blows which had been struck. These blows, Chenoweth

thinks, were probably inflicted by the hand, certainly not by any weapon. There were no wounds from which the blood could have flowed; there was a slight discolouration of the neck under the cravat, as though the assassin had attempted to strangle his victim, but Chenoweth has very little doubt that the excitement of the struggle brought on an access of the heart disease, under which our poor friend was gradually sinking, and that in fact he died a natural death."

"Good heavens!" cried Cleethorpe, springing to an upright position from his chair. "If the doctor proves this on the trial this scoundrel will cheat the gallows!"

Mr. Drage looked up at his companion for a moment, then said, "I think you will find that the man who made the attack upon Sir Geoffry will still by the law be held liable for his death, even though Doctor Chenoweth's opinions were verified."

"How on earth do you know anything about the law?" asked Cleethorpe.

"In a strange way," said the rector. "When I first left college my father was strongly opposed to my taking orders, and when I insisted, vowed he would do nothing for me, so I was left to my own resources; and, by the aid of some old City friends, I obtained the chaplaincy of one of the jails, which I held for some time, and where I studied the intricacies and working of the criminal law. A case of this kind came under my notice. A poacher shot a gamekeeper, against whom he had been heard to vow vengeance. It was contended for the defence that the wound was not originally mortal, but that death had been brought about by the bungling manner in which the surgical operation had been performed. At the trial, the judge ruled that even if this were the case, the prisoner was guilty of murder, as it was in consequence of his act that a surgical operation was necessary. And the man was hanged!"

"A good precedent," said Cleethorpe, shortly. "I hope it will be followed in this instance!"

"Do you really believe that this young man attacked his father?"

"Believe it; how can I disbelieve it? Was he not caught red-handed?"

"Might he not have found himself accidentally on the spot after the attack had been made by somebody else?"

"My dear rector," said Captain Cleethorpe, shrugging his shoulders, "your jail-chaplain's experiences, of which you were now speaking, ought to have rendered it evident to you that such an idea, if not an absurdity in itself, is, at all events, little likely to obtain credence. People very seldom find themselves on the 'spot' where a murder has been committed without some previous intention of being there. Besides, it is not supposed that the attack was made with a view to robbery; and who is there in this place, or in Europe, I might almost say, who bore any malice against our poor old friend?"

"But the accused man is his own son," said the rector. "His only son."

"Exactly," said Cleethorpe, "and that's just the worst part of the story. I suppose you don't know any of the circumstances of the case, but I am well posted up in them. This young fellow, some years since, was in the Cheddar yeomanry, in which I still hold a commission. In a row, at which I happened to be present, he showed the white feather, and the colonel was compelled to ask his father to remove him. Sir Geoffry gave way to his temper, which at that time was much worse than it has been since you have known him, and, after a frightful scene with his son, told the lad to consider himself dismissed and disinherited. I believe they never met again until the wretched night."

"Yes," said the rector, "there has been another meeting between them, which Sir Geoffry himself described to me. The young man came down here some weeks ago with certain testimony, which, at his outset in life he had declared he would obtain. He made his way in the dusk to the library, where Sir Geoffry saw him, and, after a very stormy interview, ordered him from the house."

"Now, my dear rector," said Captain Cleethorpe, impetuously, "can anything look worse for this young man? On the last occasion of his visit, you say, he made his way in the dusk to the library—exactly what he did to-night! What occasion was there for him to endeavour to see his father again, unless he were prompted by a spirit of revenge, and acted on malice prepense. Besides, there are two other points which I have not yet spoken about, but which I will now lay before you. In the first place, this fellow was lurking about here this morning in a sly, underhanded manner. *I* know that, for my horse shied at him, and as soon as he recognised me, he pulled his hat over his face and made off as fast as he could. And in the second place, when I mentioned the fact of my having seen him to Mrs. Picker-

ing—ah, you may well sigh, I am afraid this will be an awful blow to that poor dear woman—when I told Mrs. Pickering, whom Sir Geoffry had, I believe, admitted into his fullest confidence, that I had seen this youth, she seemed very much agitated, and implored me to ride back as hard as I could, and induce the young man to go away. The words which she used struck me very much at the time, and I recollect them perfectly. 'It is all-important that a meeting between them should be prevented,' she said, showing plainly that she anticipated and wished to prevent a collision."

"She will be able to tell us what she meant and what were her reasons for being thus urgent with you in a very short time now, I hope," said Mr. Drage.

"I am not quite so clear about that," said Cleethorpe. "She must have fallen with terrific force, and Chenoweth is as yet by no means certain that there is not concussion of the brain. What chance can have taken her there just at that moment? I am most anxious to hear her account of all she saw. My own impression is that she must have come suddenly upon the scene, and fainting away with horror, struck her head against the corner of the window as she fell."

At this moment the butler opened the door and announced Mr. Drew.

Mr. Drew was the senior partner of a firm of solicitors in large practice at Springside, agents to the principal landed proprietors resident in the neighbourhood, and, as representing the English interest of the leading members of the Indian colony there located, correspondents of many legal practitioners in India, to whose interests a clerk was specially relegated. With criminal business Mr. Drew's firm had little or nothing to do; prosecutions for trespass, poaching, encroachments on right of way, and such like simple matters, they undertook as part and parcel of their land-agent practice, but all heavier cases they declined. In the present instance, however, Mr. Drew, having been sent for by the rector, who knew him to have been occasionally employed by Sir Geoffry, made a point of attending in person, the London solicitors for whom Messrs. Drew and Dean acted as agents having specially requested that every attention might be paid to him; and the facts of the case, so far as Mr. Drew could collect them from several distinct and opposing narrations, promising to afford a certain amount of wholesome civil as well as criminal litigation.

Mr. Drew was a tall, white-haired, red-faced old gentleman, of portly presence and pleasing manners. One of his sons was in excellent practice at the parliamentary bar, and the other was a minor canon of Avonmouth Cathedral. His daughter was married to the eldest son of a baronet, and he himself was in receipt of an excellent income, so that he thought himself justified in classing himself with the county aristocracy, and spoke accordingly. The little pomposity noticeable in him in general society was, however, always mitigated when he found himself in company with Captain Cleethorpe, whose sharp caustic hints he was accustomed to speak of as "the language of the barracks."

"This is a sad affair, Mr. Drage," said the lawyer, after the first greeting had been exchanged, "very sad indeed! A great loss to the county society, poor Sir Geoffry, man of military celebrity, and all that kind of thing. And what a dreadful weapon to place in the hands of the lower orders."

"Weapon! lower orders! What do you mean, Mr. Drew?

"Mean, my dear sir. Don't you see that in the desperate Radical times in which we live anything which gives the lower orders a chance of turning round upon their superiors is eagerly seized by them. There is not a Sunday paper throughout the kingdom that will not put forth flaming placards, 'Murder of a baronet by his son.' Our poor friend was not a baronet, but they don't know the difference, and would not mind if they did, as it makes such a good line in the bills."

"That Sir Geoffry Heriot is dead, is unfortunately too true," said Mr. Drage, "but it has yet to be proved that he was murdered; and when that has been proved, comes the question, by whom?"

"Quite right, my dear sir, right in every particular. Doctor Chenoweth stopped me as I was driving out here, and told me there was some doubt as to the cause of death. But I explained to him the law on that point, which holds that—exactly—you know. Well then comes the question of identity; this young man was seized in the room, actually bending over the body. I looked in at the Guildhall as I passed, and the superintendent told me that his shirt-front and hands were stained with blood. What do we want more? Motive! That, oddly enough, I think we shall be able to prove!"

"You don't mean to say that Sir Geoffry

ever took you into his confidence, Mr. Drew?" said Cleethorpe, turning upon the lawyer shortly.

"I really don't see why he should not have done so," retorted the old gentleman. "The private affairs of some of the oldest and noblest families in this country, sir, are in my keeping; and I have never heard any one accuse me of betrayal of confidence. However, as it happens on this occasion, the information I received was not from Sir Geoffry; indeed, it has only just come to my knowledge. This is not the first visit this young man has paid to his father since Sir Geoffry has resided at Springside."

"How on earth did you learn that?" said Captain Cleethorpe.

"In a perfectly proper and legitimate manner you may be sure," said Mr. Drew, his red face redder than ever with excitement.

"No one questions that for a moment, my dear sir," said the Rector, quietly, "but it seems odd that you should be aware of a circumstance which is not known in the household."

"Pardon me," said Mr. Drew, "it is known in the household; to two members of it at least. The fact is, my coachman is keeping company, as the lower orders call it, with a girl who is housemaid here. The coachman happened to be in town when the news of the murder arrived, and ran up here with all the rest of the people. Here he saw the girl, who reminded him that some weeks since she had told him, as she was one day passing through the passage, she had heard a loud contention of voices; the one being Sir Geoffry's, the other being that of a stranger in the library, during which the bell was rung violently; that she lingered to see the result, and finally saw Sir Geoffry's body-servant, Murphy, or some Irish name, which I cannot exactly recollect, show a young man to the door; that same young man she said she had just seen accused of the murder and taken away into custody."

"That, left uncontradicted, would be an important piece of evidence," said Mr. Drage.

"It is indeed!" said Mr. Drew. "But what do you mean by left uncontradicted? How could it be contradicted?"

"Suppose," said Mr. Drage, with hesitation, "suppose it could be proved that Sir Geoffry was sorry for having spoken to his son as he did on that occasion, that he acknowledged the lad's goodness, and mentioned his intention of receiving him back, and——"

"My dear sir—my dear sir," interrupted Mr. Drew, "you can say all this to me, because I know your excellence of heart, and all that sort of thing; but if you were to talk in this way to Messrs. Moss and Moss, of Thavies Inn, London, whom I shall instruct to get up the case, they would laugh in your face! The idea of talking about proving our poor dear friend's intention. Facts, my dear sir, are what will go down in a case like this—facts, and nothing else!"

"Then you are not going to get up this case yourself, Mr. Drew?" asked the captain.

"No, I am not, Captain Cleethorpe," said the old lawyer. "I have had little or no practice, I am happy to say, in criminal business, and as this is a most important case, I shall instruct Messrs. Moss, who are certainly at the head of that branch of the profession. I telegraphed to them just now, and shall expect one of the partners down by the first train to-morrow morning. He will require to see all the witnesses, and this man Murphy, of whom we have just spoken."

"You mean Riley, Mr. Drew."

"Very likely, Captain Cleethorpe. I am not expected to remember the names of the servants of all my clients. However, Mr. Moss will require to see him, and above all Mrs. Pickering."

"I am sorry to say that Mrs. Pickering still remains in a state of unconsciousness," said Mr. Drage.

"That's bad," said the lawyer; "let us hope she will be better in the morning. I am very curious to hear what she has to say in this matter. Now, gentlemen, good-night. Mr. Moss will come straight to my office, and I will bring him up here at once."

Mr. Drew shook hands with the rector, bowed to Captain Cleethorpe, and took his departure. The other gentlemen were about to follow, when the butler presented himself and said, "That the young woman who had been sitting up with Mrs. Pickering had come to say that the lady had just opened her eyes and mentioned Mr. Drage's name, and hearing that he was in the house, she expressed a wish to see him immediately."

"I will come at once," said Mr. Drage, then muttered to himself, "Now I shall learn the truth in this horrible affair!"

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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XVIII. MAY IS PROMISED A TITLE.

THE two girls did not meet again till evening, and Katherine was then so gentle that May could scarcely believe she had not dreamed all the scene which had happened in the morning. Katherine and Christopher seemed exceedingly good friends, Mr. Lee looking feverishly happy, and Katherine pensive, with a tenderness of manner which was wont to be shed about her freely in her most fascinating moods. May devoted herself to Mrs. Lee, that lady showing a sense of comfort from her sympathy, which was touching to the young champion of a motherly heart. The evening was tedious, and May was thinking that she must request Lady Archbold to send her home to Monasterlea; but at bedtime Katherine came to her in her room.

"I have come to ask pardon for my rudeness of the morning," she said. "You must not believe a word I said. It was only one of my freaks. Now don't think of going, or I shall say you cannot forgive. I am an insulting wretch when my temper gets the better of me."

And Katherine sighed, and looked splendidly regretful.

"Never mind me," said May; "what about Mr. Lee?"

"I told you not to believe anything I said to-day. You may safely trust Christopher and his happiness to myself."

May looked up out of the trunk which she had been persistently packing. Katherine met the questioning eyes, and there was a reservation in her tone which conveyed more than the words might imply. May tossed back a dress into her wardrobe.

"Oh, if you are in earnest now," she said, "I will do anything you like. But how am I to know when you are in earnest?"

Katherine turned aside and smiled curiously. Might she not as well let this little fool go home? She had a serene contempt for her, but could understand that some people might like her for her innocence.

"Believe that I am in earnest when I tell you so," she said. "Never believe me when I am in a passion."

"So now it is Paul Finiston who must suffer," said May. "But is he really coming home, and does he love you? Or was that a story too?"

Katherine shrugged her shoulders and looked mysterious.

"We cannot help these things happening," she said. "Don't you think that it is likely to be true?"

May surveyed the beauty ruefully, and acknowledged to herself that it was likely to be true. Katherine watched the changes of her face for some moments with interest, and then began to talk quickly in her most lively manner.

"Come, let us be comfortable," she said. "Shut up the trunks, and don't look at them for another month. We are going to have visitors, and I intend that you shall charm them. You must not be offended if I give you some lessons on your appearance. You must know that your style of dressing makes a fright of you. Now don't look dismayed, for we will change all that. Women ought to take a pleasure in making themselves attractive. Your hair in a better style, and a little pearl-powder upon your

face; you blush too much, and a bright colour is very vulgar. But you must not think that I mean to discourage you. On the contrary, I will turn you out quite pretty if you will let me. Only put yourself in my hands, and I promise you shall have a title before a year is past."

May listened in silence, glowing with the condemned blush, at the sudden revelation that she had been found so unpleasing. The startling promise with which Katherine finished her speech had not the desired effect in elating her spirits.

"But I do not want a title," she said, slowly, "and—and——" She was well aware that Katherine was a skilful artist of the toilet. "I like a clean face, and I intend always to have one. If I am ugly as God made me, then I choose to remain ugly."

"Who said you were ugly? Not I, I am sure. But you are an obstinate, old-fashioned little goody, and I don't mind telling you so to your face. The world has gone round a few times since your respected Aunt Martha learned those very prim notions which she has so faithfully handed down to you: what in her day was propriety is now mere affectation. However, promise that you will stay with me, and I shall see about your conversion at my leisure."

"I don't mind staying," said May, "since you wish it so much. But I mean to keep to my own way of thinking all the time."

So Katherine had her way; but her plan was nevertheless not to be fulfilled.

The next morning May was up early and abroad among the flower-gardens. She had got a letter from home which should have been given to her last night. Aunt Martha bade her return without delay. "Paul has arrived," wrote the old lady, "and he wants to see you. At any rate, it is time for you to come home."

May was not so much astonished at the news as she would have been but for that unpleasant conversation with Miss Archbold. So he was already come to seek Katherine, and Katherine, if she had truth in her, ought to be wed to Mr. Lee within a month. What could be done for Paul; the good-natured boy who had been so kind to her in Dublin? The Paul described by Katherine had passed away from her mind; becoming but one of the crowd of those fine lovers of Miss Archbold, of whom May had been hearing much since she had come to Camlough. It was for the friend of her own memory that she was sorely vexed.

Rambling in an alley, among all the dewy rose-trees, she came upon Mr. Lee. He seemed as wretched this morning as he had looked happy last night. He was pale and worn, and his dress was out of order.

"You look as if you had been up all night!" said May.

"I have been up all night," said Christopher, "but I shall now go and dress, so as to appear as if I had had my sleep like other people."

"But what is the matter with you now? You know that you are going to be happy. I was about to congratulate you, but your face does not invite me."

"You are a true-hearted girl, and may the world never spoil you! I believe that I have made one friend here at least."

"That is true, if you mean me," said May, kindly. "I would do anything in my power to help you out of your difficulty. But I have reason to believe that you will be happy before long. Indeed, I speak the truth. I wonder if I ought to tell you——"

"You ought to tell me everything—I have a right to know!" cried Christopher, eagerly.

"Well, then, she admitted to me last night that she intended——"

"Intended what?" interrupted Christopher. "Intended to destroy me—to spoil all my life? I saw it long ago, though I strove to shut my eyes to it. It is coming upon me now, and I deserve it."

"Why do you interrupt me?" said May, impatient in her turn. "I had good news to give you, and it seems you will not have it."

"Forgive me! But did you say good news? My head seems confused. Did you mean to say good news?"

"I understood from her," said May, "that she intends to be your wife."

"Did you?" said Christopher, joyfully. "God bless you; you are a staunch friend. What a wretch I was to doubt her! What an evil-thinking coward! No doubt she has a right to be capricious if she pleases. A girl like that does not readily throw herself away; but when once she makes up her mind she is true as steel. I will not say what thoughts were in my mind when I met you; but think what a ruined creature I behold myself, both in heart and in fortune, in my whole life's career, when the devil gets into my head and makes me fancy she may be false! I deserve to suffer well for

letting a doubt come near my mind. You will forgive me my disorder, and I will go and trim myself. After the night I have passed I must appear like a savage."

"And you will tell me of your happiness when it is fully secured?" said May, as they parted; and she watched him stride away, big and glad, towards the house. Your six-feet men have not always giant intellects, but they often carry very tender hearts.

May did not tell Katherine the chief news of her aunt's letter. She could not speak again to Miss Archbold about Paul; she only made known her aunt's wish that she should go home, and after no little difficulty she was suffered to depart.

How small and simple her home looked after Camlough, and how wholesome Aunt Martha, in her clear-starched kerchief and fair white cap! Paul was coming in the evening. He had taken up his quarters in a farmer's house a couple of miles away. As May took off her bonnet at her own little dressing-table, she saw her face looking charmingly brightened up. In spite of Katherine's judgment, she was not quite a fright. What a glorious thing was joy which could thus burnish people's looks! She dared not look long enough to assure herself that beauty had actually taken possession of her face. Katherine had told her that it was all mock-modesty for a young woman not to think of her appearance. But Katherine lived in the world. Fine ladies had, perhaps, little time for self-respect, but people who were not fashionable had a great deal of leisure to perceive when they were going wrong.

So May bustled about her room, briskly putting herself and the chamber into the order which her fancy approved of. She was wiser than she had been a month ago, inasmuch as she had got a lesson in coquetry for life; she was now going to profit by the lesson. A month ago she would innocently have dressed in her prettiest to meet Paul, without thinking why she did it, or that she ought not to do it. Now, it could not be done without taking away her ease. This was not Camlough, so she need not change her dress because it was evening. She kept on the thick white "wrapper" which had been fresh at breakfast-time that morning; a crimson rose was already fastened in the bosom, and that might stay. Nice braids of hair were nothing unusual, and there could not be any vanity in a pair of newly-washed hands. And so she took her way to the parlour, as on the most ordinary occasions, such as the long, silent, uneventful summer evenings of last year; as if no sound were going to disturb the mute monotony of the hours but the click of her aunt's knitting-needles, the ticking of the clock, the distant piping of some cow-boy in the valley, the wail of a sleepy plover shuddering in at the open window, or the sound of her own voice reading a chapter of Thomas à Kempis aloud to Miss Martha in the dusk.

A great glare had flashed over the hills, and down the paths, and through the open door into the hall. As May reached the door, a long shadow and a quick step came out of the blinding red glow, and stopped at the threshold. Here then, of course, was the visitor arrived: but not the lad whom May remembered. This was not May's merry friend. But it was Katherine's handsome lover, without a doubt.

"Mr. Finiston!" said May, giving her hand. She could not say "Paul" to this important-looking gentleman.

"Miss Mourne!" said Paul, uncovering his curls. He could not say "May" to this dignified-looking maiden. But he held the proffered hand as tightly as if he had got at last what he had been in want of all his life. And May was regarding him with sympathetic curiosity, wondering if he had heard as yet the report of Katherine's approaching marriage: and if so, how he was bearing it. Miss Martha stepped out of the parlour, where she had been setting forth her dainties on the tea-table.

"So you have been walking over your property all day," said she to Paul. "May, you go in and pour out the tea. I have had to do it for myself during the past three weeks. I have just got her home, and I intend to make her work. She has been living like a fine lady among the magnates of the land."

Paul thought she looked a fine lady in the finest sense of the word; excellently fit for household work like the present, as her quick hand flitted about the board, and her sweet face smiled at him and dimpled above the tea-pot. It was nectar and not tea which she handed him in a cup. She had a love-philter in her cream-ewer, this witch-maid of the mountains. Paul had, until now, held three images in his mind, now they paled away and became faint for evermore. A little grey pelisse making purchases in Dublin; a maiden with outstretched hands upon a bridge; a gracious young gentlewoman holding parley with a pedlar. These three young people had

been, successively, his loves; now let them vanish, for their day had gone past. They could not bear comparison with this radiant tea-making creature, who could not hide her gladness that her friend had come home.

Not a word was spoken about the miser of Tobereevil. Paul shirked the subject, and the evening was given up to his own adventures abroad. The three friends sat all through the sunset, and far into the dusk, while Paul poured forth his recitals, and the audience drank in every word he spoke. The little parlour with its queer fittings seemed paradise to this love-sick and home-sick wanderer. May sat opposite to him on a bench along the window. Two huge jars filled with roses and sheaves of lavender stood between them, making a bank of scent and colour across which their eyes and words travelled. Miss Martha sat in her straight-backed arm-chair before the two, with her hands folded in her lap, no knitting being tolerable on this particular evening. The window was open, to the utmost folding back of its latticed panes, and the climbing roses were dipping over the strong brown framework, and lying along the lintel. As Paul told his foreign adventures, he felt himself to be only some lucky Othello, or less savage Feramorz. He forgot that he was a Finiston, and the heir of Tobereevil. May's eyes glowed towards him through the fading light, and he saw in her an embodiment of all the fair hopes that had withdrawn him from the influence of his dreads and difficulties, that he might sit here at this hour in delicious peace at her side. He saw in her here present all the beauties with which his fancy had ever gifted her in absence; besides a tender paleness of cheek when thrilled by grave interest, and a spiritual abstraction of the eyes at times, out of which he gathered for himself the assurance that she could search far with him into whatever mysteries might trouble him. And yet—he delighted to discover—he could call back the merry smiles and the laughter-loving dimples.

All these satisfactions he did not note on the moment, while he lingered in the dim atmosphere of the parlour among the cloisters; but they were duly recalled and gloated over as he walked home to his farm-house under the moonlight. While sitting by her side, within reach of her hand and the sympathy of her face, he could not analyse the charm which had so swiftly mastered his fancy; her presence, then, had been only the nearness of a lovely and luminous soul and body, full of kindred warmth and dreams. It was after he had left her that he remembered the strong breadth of her brow with all its girlish fairness, the deep fire in her eyes, the sweet curves of her mouth, the tender firmness of her softly-moulded chin. It was then that she seemed to show herself to him in the many changeful attitudes that her character could assume, without losing a line of strength or a curve of grace. On that warm July night Paul was deeply dipped in love. He had been parched in his exile, and he had brought himself to drink; but he was only the more athirst after this first spicy draught.

Miss Martha and May had walked a little way with him through the field-paths towards the moor. The twilight blurred and blended the ghostly outlines of the ruins, and garden and graveyard were wreathed together in one gleaming, fragrant acre. The warm wind swept over the uncut grass, which had already the breath of hay, and the river glinted in the hollow, under its bending rows of trees. The moonlight hung like a faint silvery veil along the moorland, and the lights in distant farm-houses shone like will-o'-the-wisps in a marsh. The weird watch-note of some sleepless wild-bird came floating up at intervals from the meadows. The sweet, mild summer beat in every pulse of the night.

Very slowly, and with few words, the three friends had sauntered along. At the gate that parted the farm-lands from the open hills they touched hands, and said good-night.

"Well, my dear, and what do you think of him?" asked Aunt Martha, as the women returned homeward.

May did not answer for a few moments. She was pacing a little in advance, with her arms crossed on her breast, a trick she had from childhood when in musing humour. Two or three times her feet fell on the grass as if to the rhythm of some music that was solemn, but passing sweet.

"Eh, Aunty?" she said at last. "Did you speak to me?"

"I was asking you what you thought of him, my dear."

"Don't ask me to-night, then," said May, stopping suddenly, putting her hands on her aunt's shoulders, and looking frankly and smilingly in her face; "moonlight makes people mad, you know, and I might

be too enthusiastic. To-morrow we shall see him better as he is."

"Well, well, my love!" said Miss Martha, "I am not going to bother you. Let us now get into bed."

But as May went into her bedroom she thought of Katherine. And she remembered that for some hours she had forgotten to pity Paul.

FEATHERS AND IRON.

I AM on the sunny side of fifty-five; not that the fact is of the slightest importance to any one but myself and my friends; but I mention it to show how comparatively young a man may be, who remembers things that to those who have not yet arrived at middle age might seem to reach into a remote antiquity. I remember old London Bridge. I remember shooting the particularly dangerous arch in a wherry. I remember the Thames watermen, with their badges and their quaint mediæval costume. I remember when there was neither a cab nor an omnibus plying for hire in the streets of London, and when the lumbering old vehicles called hackney-coaches, with two horses, did heavily and expensively the duty now performed lightly and cheaply by the hansom. I remember the wretched old watchmen, or "Charlies," who crawled along the streets at night from twilight until dawn, and called out the hour and the state of the weather and the moon, and who when off their beats took refuge in crazy old sentry-boxes, set up for their use by the parishes that employed them, and which it was the especial glory and pleasure of the fast young men of the day to overset and carry off. I remember the time when flint, steel, and tinder-box afforded the only available means of procuring a light or a fire, unless by borrowing from a fire or a light already kindled. I remember the first feeble attempt at the lucifer-match, when the match, instead of being drawn over a rough surface to be ignited, had to be dipped into a little bottle or phial, which you kept in your waistcoat-pocket. I remember when snuffers were indispensable to the burning of candles, when women wore pattens in bad weather, and goloshes were things unknown, and india-rubber, of which they are now made, was only used for rubbing out pencil-marks from paper. I remember the crowds that used to collect every day at noon in Fleet-street, to see the wooden giants on the tower of old St. Dunstan's church strike the hour with their clubs. I remember when Trafalgar-square and its sculptural atrocities had no existence, and when the King's Mews stood on the site of the National Gallery. I remember when members of the Houses of Lords and Commons did not think it beneath their dignity to fight duels, and when the late John Black of the late Morning Chronicle challenged the still living Mr. Roebuck to settle, or attempt to settle, a personal quarrel, arising out of a political discussion, by the same illogical method. I remember when the rate of postage varied according to distance, and when a letter to the Land's End or John o' Groat's House was charged two shillings or half a crown for conveyance; and when people well to do in the world, rather than pay such a rate, gave themselves a vast deal of trouble to hunt up members of parliament to badger or coax them out of their signatures, which, written on the corner of letters, franked the documents to any part of the British Isles. I remember when the only pen that man, woman, or child could write with was the goose-quill, or the more delicate wing feathers of the crow; when pen-mending was an art and an accomplishment that employed much time, and needed much patience on the part of the inexpert or the hasty. I need scarcely add that I remember the old mail-coaches, with their jaunty red-coated drivers and guards clad in the royal livery, and their gallant, almost triumphant departure every evening from Lombard-street and St. Martin's-le-Grand, in days when railways, though spoken of and recommended by the far-seeing few, were condemned by the short-seeing many as very dangerous experiments, and when the agency of electricity for the conveyance of messages was utterly unsuspected, except by a poet or a stray visionary or two. As for the old semaphore, that worked its ungainly arms on the top of the ugly old Admiralty at Whitehall, to signal its fellow at Greenwich, it seems but yesterday that, its vocation being gone, it was removed from its airy eminence, perhaps to be preserved as a relic of the past, or more probably to be chopped up for firewood.

The men to whom the world is indebted for inland and ocean telegraphy and for the penny post, still live, and long may they flourish to receive the gratitude of their countrymen! He to whom we owe the apparently little, but in reality great, boon

of the steel pen, without the aid of which Rowland Hill's immense social reformation —the penny post—would have been restricted and comparatively valueless, has just passed away, having attained the allotted span of seventy years, which few are permitted to overpass. Joseph Gillott, of Birmingham, whose pens are known all over the civilised world, died early in the year, at the age of seventy-two, in the possession of a handsome fortune, which he had accumulated in his business, and leaving behind him the reputation, not only of a kindly and upright man, but of the pioneer of a great manufacture and of an intelligent patron of art.

Joseph Gillott did not invent the steel pen, any more than James Watt invented the steam-engine, or George Stephenson the railway. He only did, in his own peculiar way, what those illustrious men had done before him; he perfected that which he found already in existence, but inchoate and inoperative, and rendered available and cheap that which before his time was either unavailable or costly. The steel or iron pen is as old as history, and, under its classic name of stylus, was the medium of introducing into modern language that which we call the style or manner of a writer. Not only iron and steel, but gold and silver pens were manufactured for the dainty before the days of Gillott. But all of these were expensive articles. Gillott was employed as a grinder in the manufacture of steel pens, which were made by hand, and sold at the rate of about three shillings and sixpence each. The correspondence of the world—its business, its loves, its friendships, and its quarrels—were all carried on by the aid of the quill, called by the Germans feder, by the French plume, and by ourselves pen, from the Latin penna, a feather, so that the people of these great nations, unaware of the solecism, inaccurately and habitually speak of steel feathers, whenever they mention those little implements for the transmission of thought which the people of this latter half of the nineteenth century are compelled to use. If no substitute for a goose-quill had been discovered, it is evident that the world could not have maintained a tithe of its present correspondence, unless geese and other fowls had been bred in extraordinary numbers for the pluckage of their wings. Twenty years ago Mr. Gillott employed six hundred girls and young women, besides machinists, in his manufactory—the number which he since employed, the writer cannot undertake to specify—and produced between one hundred and fifty and two hundred millions of steel pens annually. It would be an interesting little sum in arithmetic, to calculate how many geese would have to be reared, and fed, and afterwards robbed, for the supply of such a vast consumption of quills as is represented by Mr. Gillott's figures. When he first began to manufacture steel pens, he had great and manifold difficulties to contend with. People did not approve of steel pens, and would not write with them. Social conservatives, such as bankers, great merchants, lawyers, authors, and others, would not admit them into their offices or studies, looking upon them with as much distrust, surprise, and aversion as the domestic servants and paupers of the present day look upon that wholesome Australian beef and mutton which they have not learned to appreciate. So great and long-continued in certain quarters was the prejudice entertained against steel pens, that it is recorded of a late master in one of the Superior Courts at Westminster, so recently as eight years ago, that he took so much to heart the introduction of the objectionable article, in lieu of the quill, into the sacred precincts of the Queen's Bench, that he became firmly convinced of the approaching and inevitable downfall of British liberty and the British nation—which he thought he could distinctly trace to this daring and sacrilegious innovation. The worthy man —like the love-sick lady in the ballad—is said to have drooped his head and died, in consequence of this cruel blow, which was aggravated, to his sensitive mind, by the fact that his lordship on the bench, not only actually used the pernicious implement, but publicly declared it to be an improvement upon the time-honoured feather of the goose! This blow was too hard to bear, and the good man never entirely got over it.

But the unreasonable prejudices of the public, which at this early period of his career were still more formidable, did not discourage Mr. Gillott. After awhile, though in a small way, he introduced the agency of steam into the manufacture, by which he was speedily enabled to supply a much cheaper and an infinitely better article. After a very few years he began to accumulate wealth, and it was reported of him that he was fearful of opening a banking account, lest the fame of his earn-

ings should attract rivals into the business, but kept his sovereigns in earthen jars—as if they were pickles—or sewed them into old stockings, or into the mattress of his bed. By degrees, however, the demand for steel pens increased so much that he was unable to supply it, although he largely extended his factories and the number of his work-people. The secret of his wealth and its sources could be preserved no longer, and rivalry and improvement went hand in hand, until the steel pens of Birmingham became known and approved all over the world. By the time that the penny post came into operation in Great Britain, and afterwards in other countries, the steel pen was ready for the millions of people who had scarcely ever written letters before, and who could not have profited by the beneficent boon if the goose and the crow had continued to be their only providers.

A visit to Mr. Gillott's or any other great pen factory in the "toy-shop of the world" (for "toy" in the trade phraseology of Birmingham is a word that designates not only pens, but pins, needles, buckles, cork-screws, nails, hammers, and every conceivable tool that can be manufactured of metal), is one of the things which every traveller who comes to England from a far country must "do," just as he "does" Westminster Abbey, the Tower of London, Windsor Castle, or the Trosachs. The sight is exceedingly interesting, and includes a far greater variety of processes than a spectator, previously uninformed, might imagine. From the unrolling of the finely tempered sheets of steel, not thicker than cardboard—from which the first rude body of the future pen is pierced by the delicate but all-powerful agency of steam—to the several processes of curving, slitting the nib, polishing, drying, and packing, the little implement undergoes a long series of manipulations and transformations. Men are only employed in the care of the engines and the reparation of the necessary machines by which the several results are obtained. All the rest of the work is performed by women, whose deft fingers are better suited than those of men for the dainty operations required. The work is light—pleasant in itself—and unlike the labour employed in the manufacture of artificial flowers and grasses, and many others where women and children are employed, involves no detriment or even danger to the health, while the wages are much higher than can be obtained by needle-work, or other forlorn occupations to which unskilled workers of the softer sex are compelled to resort to earn a bare subsistence. The pen-makers as a rule are well paid, and when out in the streets of Birmingham in their holiday costumes on Sundays or other days of leisure, present not alone a highly respectable, but so gay and showy an appearance, as to prove that the prosperity of Birmingham must react very considerably on that of Coventry, Manchester, Derby, and Paisley, and all others that grow rich by providing finery for the ladies.

The quantity of steel pens annually turned out of the factories of Birmingham, judged by the number produced by the one firm of Gillott and Company, cannot fall far short of a thousand millions. The actual business of the world in buying and selling, and keeping accounts, employs, it must be supposed, about three-fourths of them—leaving some two hundred and fifty millions, or thereabouts, for love and idleness, for friendship, acquaintance, and politeness, and last, not least, for literature. What becomes of them all when they are worn out?—for the steel pen is too cheap to be worth mending. The same question has been asked about pins and needles, and can only receive the one reply: that like the men and women who make and use them, they return, when they have served their purpose, to the earth from which they came; and out of which nothing can be taken without ultimate restoration.

ECHO VERSES.

Much ingenuity has been shown by rhymesters — some of them not merely poetasters, but real poets in their hours of merry relaxation—in the construction of what are designated Echo Verses. These are lines in which the last word is given as a question, and the answer to it is the same word repeated as an echo; or there may be a group of words so treated, instead of a single word; or the echo may be a sort of corroboration instead of a direct answer to a question; or it may involve a kind of verbal pun, such as those much used in the construction of conundrums. Some languages lend themselves more readily than others to this kind of inventive pleasantry, but examples are to be met with in most European tongues.

There is an old Latin echo verse, rather solemn than humorous in its character, in

which mora is echoed by ora, flendo by endo, spero by ero, and solamen by amen. If skilfully constructed, such verses read agreeably enough; the echo is really an echo or repetition of the ending of the previous word, and not a copy of the entire word; it is at once a better echo and a better rhyme. In most instances, however, the rhymester shuns any very rigid rules of construction. Erasmus wrote a dialogue in which the nymph Echo was a good linguist; she gave her echoing answers in Greek, Latin, or Hebrew, according as the exigencies of the rhyme best suited her purpose.

The sixteenth century produced many specimens, some written by court flatterers, some by men whose names will not die. In one of the masques represented before Queen Elizabeth during her numerous progresses, Master Gascoigne holds a conversation with Echo, in which the illustrious sovereign is flattered in a way quite customary in those days:

"Well, Echo, tell me yet,
How might I come to see
This comely queen of whom we talk?
Oh, were she now by thee!"
(Echo) "By thee."

"By me, oh, were that true,
Then might I see her face;
How might I know her from the rest,
Or judge her by her grace?"
"Her grace."

"Well, then, if so mine eyes
Be such as they have been,
Methinks I see among them all
This same should be the queen."
"The queen!"

Ben Jonson, about the same time, or somewhat later, made use of the machinery of the echo verse in his Cynthia's Revels, much more gracefully than the poet of the above effusion:

"Where may I direct my speech that thou may'st hear?"
"Here!"
"So nigh?"
"Aye!"
"Nay, but hear——"
"But here!"
"Jove calls thee hence, and his will brooks no stay."
"O, stay!"
"Know you from whom you fly, or whence?"
"Hence!"
"Make not so fast away."
"Away!"

Early in the seventeenth century some echo verses were published in Italian, under the title of Echo in Versi pari: Cosa molto bella e sententiosa. The construction is rather singular. There are forty-nine couplets, or pairs of lines, and the echo rhymes with the last word or syllable of the second line of each couplet, so as to produce repetitions or reverberations, such as the following: esempio—empio; amori—mori; mio—io; clamore—amore; dama—ama; viaggio—aggio; profonde—onde; altramente—mente, &c.

In the early part of the reign of Charles the First, a curious translation was published of a Latin composition on the right Course of possessing Life and Health; together with Soundness and Integrity of the Senses, Judgment, and Memory. It is in the form of a dialogue between a glutton and Echo. The reader will at once see which is the echo part of each combination, without italics or special notification:

"My belly I do defy."
"Fie!"
"Who curbs his appetite's a fool."
"Ah, fool!"
"I do not like this abstinence."
"Hence!"
"My joy's a feast, my wish is wine!"
"Swine!"
"We epicures are happy truly."
"You lie!"
"Who's that which giveth me the lie?"
"I!"
"What, Echo, thou that mock'st a voice?"
"A voice!"
"May I not, Echo, eat my fill?"
"Ill!"
"Wilt hurt me if I drink too much?"
"Much!"
"Thou mock'st me, nymph, I'll not believe it."
"Believe it!"
"Dost thou condemn then what I do?"
"I do!"
"I grant it doth exhaust the purse."
"Worse!"
"Is't this which dulls the sharpest wit?"
"Best wit!"
"Is't this which brings infirmities?"
"It is!"
"Dost thou no glutton virtuous know?"
"No!"
"Wouldst have me temp'rate till I die?"
"I!"
"Shall I therein find ease and pleasure?"
"Yea, sure!"
"But is't a thing which profit brings?"
"It brings!"
"To mind or body, or to both?"
"To both!"
"Will it my life on earth prolong?"
"O, long!"
"Wilt make me vig'rous until death?"
"Till death!"
"Wilt bring me to eternal bliss?"
"Yes!"
"Then sweetest Temperance, I'll love thee."
"I love thee!"
"I'll be a belly god no more."
"No more!"
"If all be true which thou dost tell,
They who fare sparingly fare well."
"Farewell!"

During the mutual recriminations between the Cavaliers and Roundheads, a comedy was acted at Cambridge, the savour of which is sufficiently denoted by such echo verses as the following:

"Now, Echo, on what's religion grounded?"
"Roundhead!"

"Who its professors most considerable?"
"Rabble!"

"How prove they themselves to be the godly?"
"Oddly!"

"How stand they to the government civil?"
"Evil!"

"But to the king they say they are most loyal?"
"Lie all!"

"Then God keep king and state from these same men!"
"Amen!"

A few years later, when the fortunes of Charles the First had become dark and threatening, another royalist echo was put forth, similar in construction and in sentiment to the foregoing:

"What wants thou, that thou art in this taking?"
"A king!"

"What made him first remove hence his residing?"
"Siding!"

"Did any here deny him satisfaction?"
"Faction!"

"Tell me whereon the strength of faction lies?"
"On lies!"

"What didst thou when the king left his parliament?"
"Lament!"

"What terms wouldst give to gain his company?"
"Any!"

"What wouldst thou do if here thou mightst behold him?"
"Hold him!"

"Wouldst thou save him with thy best endeavour?"
"Ever!"

"But if he comes not, what becomes of London?"
"Undone!"

In the time of the De Witts, when politics ran high in Holland, there was a sarcastic and satirical echo song which displayed much ability; but the echoes are not easily translatable into English. Somewhat after the time of those Dutchmen our Samuel Butler wrote his Hudibras; in which, although regular echo verses do not occur, there are bits of echo to be met with in several passages; as for example:

Quoth he, "Oh whither, wicked Bruin,
Art thou fled to my——"
"Ruin!"

"Who would grudge to spend his blood in
His honour's cause?" Quoth she,
"A pudding!"

In the reign of Queen Anne an echo song was published, the words of which are attributed to Addison. It was of the pastoral kind, in which lovers are conventionally supposed to be shepherds and shepherdesses; and the echo is double, like some real echoes with which we are all familiar:

"Echo, tell me while I wander
O'er this fairy plain to prove him,
If my shepherd still grows fonder,
Ought I in return to love him?"
"Love him, love him!"

"If he loves as is the fashion,
Should I churlishly forsake him;
Or in pity to his passion,
Fondly to my bosom take him?"
"Take him, take him!"

"Thy advice, then, I'll adhere to,
Since in Cupid's chains I've led him,
And with Lubin shall not fear to
Marry if you answer, 'Wed him.'"
"Wed him, wed him!"

Later in the century a rhymester brought satire and punning to his aid in an echo song, which certainly breathes but little of the pastoral spirit:

"If I address the Echo yonder,
What will its answer be, I wonder?"
"I wonder!"

"Oh, wondrous Echo, tell me, bless 'ee,
Am I for marriage or celibacy?"
"Silly Bessy!"

"If then to win the maid I try,
Shall I find her a property?"
"A proper tie!"

"If neither being grave nor funny
Will win this maid to matrimony?"
"Try money!"

"If I should try to gain her heart,
Shall I go plain, or rather smart?"
"Smart!"

"She mayn't love dress, and I, again, then,
May come too smart, and she'll complain then."
"Come plain then!"

"Then if to marry me I tease her,
"What will she say if that should please her?"
"Please, sir!"

"When cross nor good words can appease her,
What if such naughty whims should seize her?"
"You'd see, sir!"

"When wed she'll change, for Love's no sticker,
And love her husband less than liquor!"
"Then lick her!"

"To leave me thus I can't compel her,
Though every woman else excel her!"
"Sell her!"

In 1807, a bookseller at Nuremberg, named Palm, published an echo song, terribly sarcastic upon the Emperor Napoleon. Marshal Davoust, who held sway in Germany at that time, made short work of the matter; he tried Palm by military law, and had him shot. A translation of it was composed; but, like most translations, it fails to give the full spirit of the original. Napoleon is supposed to be holding a colloquy with Echo:

"Alone, I am in this sequester'd spot unheard!"
"Unheard!"

"S'death! who answers me? What being is there nigh?"
"I!"

"Now I guess; to report my accents Echo has made her task!"
"Ask!"
"Know'st thou whether London will henceforth continue to resist?"
"Resist!"
"Whether Vienna and other courts will oppose me always?"
"Always!"
"What, then, must I expect after so many reverses?"
"Reverses!"
"What! should I like a coward vile to compound be reduced?"
"Reduced!"
"After so many bright exploits be forced to restitution?"
"Restitution!"
"Restitution of what I've got by heroic feats and martial address!"
"Yes!"
"What will be the fate of so much toil and trouble?"
"Trouble!"
"What will become of my people, already too unhappy?"
"Happy!"
"What should I then be, that think myself immortal?"
"Mortal!"
"The world is filled with the glory of my name, you know."
"No!"
"Formerly its fame struck the vast globe with terror."
"Error!"
"Sad Echo, begone. I grow infuriate, I die!"
"Die!"

The late Archdeacon Wrangham, who penned many graceful witticisms and lively effusions, wrote an echo song on the same subject as that which prompted Palm, Napoleon; but he infused a peculiar spirit into it by mixing up together English, French, Italian, and Latin. There are fourteen echoes belonging to as many couplets; the following are some that illustrate the odd polyglot mode of construction:

"Tell me of what com'st the heart of Gaul?"
"Of gall!"
"Dic mihi quæso virum, vitus qui tot bona parte?"
"Bonaparte!"
"Can George, then, thrash the Corsican?"
"He can!"
"Again I call, sweet maid, come echo me."
"Eccomi!"
"Il reste donc à souhaiter que la France lui désobeit."
"So be it!"
"Ma sotto i rè erano sempre allegri."
"All agree!"
"T'unlock our India, France would make of Turkey"
"Her key!"
"Wretches as changeful as the changing ocean."
"O, chiens!"

About forty years ago, when Paganini was fiddling into his pocket the large sums of money which his admirers were willing to pay for the pleasure of hearing him, one of the humorists of the day asked Echo what she thought of the matter:

"What are they who pay three guineas
To hear a tune of Paganini's?"
"Pack o' ninnies."

WANTED IN CLERKENWELL.

Since the repeal of the paper and newspaper stamp duties, a number of journals have sprung up in London of a totally different character from the cosmopolitan diurnals which we are wont to designate as the daily press. The sheets we refer to, some of them published daily, but most at longer intervals, concern themselves wholly with the news and business of certain localities. London is a country in itself, and its districts have each its own local organ, hardly known outside the quarter to which it specially restricts itself. These London-provincial journals, as we may term them, report vestry meetings at length, fulminate against local nuisances, and are great on the subjects of local paving and drainage. They must supply a felt want, else they could not exist, and that they must do a considerable amount of good can hardly be questioned. One of their most important offices is the publication of advertisements at a rate so moderate as to induce people to advertise in them with regard to matters that would hardly bear the higher charges of the advertising media commanding a wider area; and one or two of them, by reason of their copious display of what may be termed petty advertisements, have attained a wide circulation outside their own immediate districts. A glance at the advertising columns of the Clerkenwell News gives a curious glimpse of insight into the manner of life, the wants and wishes of our London middle-lower and lower classes. In these columns are to be found few announcements of new public companies. The gorgeous "Jeames of Buckley-square" evidently does not consider the Clerkenwell News an eligible medium for offering himself, his powdered head and shapely calves, to the notice of a discriminating aristocracy. We find in it no advertisements of "a charming country residence to be let, standing in its own grounds, and within reach of four packs of hounds," or of "a noble West-end mansion for sale, with five reception-rooms, and every accommodation for the family of a nobleman or gentleman of position." The constituency of Clerkenwell is not to be found among the clubs, nor, should we

imagine, do its readers drive their carriages, unless a light trap, adapted for multifarious uses, can be called one's own carriage.

Byron wanted a hero—"an uncommon want;" it seems evident that a far more common want among us at the present day is a "general servant." Any one answering to this description—in itself somewhat vague, but sufficiently well defined by conventional usage—must be hard to please if she cannot find a place to her liking out of the hundred and forty which are advertised as open to suitable applicants. "General servants" are evidently at a premium just now, and must be wooed by the enunciation of some special attractions. These usually take the form of "good wages" or "liberal wages," and "all found," "no children," "family small and quiet," "washing put out," "no baby," "a comfortable home for a clean, tidy girl," and so forth. But the advertisers for "general servants," while spreading these nets in the eyes of those whom they desire to attract, are, for the most part, staunch sticklers for "a good character." Some demand a "good personal character," which seems a distinction without a difference; others go still further, and stipulate for "respectability" in addition to the character. Some there are, but very few, who do not seem to regard character as the sine quâ non, and, as a compensation for this concession, seem to consider themselves entitled to make various stipulations as to the qualifications of the presumably characterless, to the effect that they must "cook nicely," "take a child three hours a day," or be "active, industrious, and clean." There seems as great a demand for "girls" as for "general servants," but the inducements offered to the former are not proportionally great. The usual tariff of wages for a girl under sixteen, used to house work, seems about one shilling and sixpence or two shillings per week—in many cases "with her tea" is added; from which it may be inferred that other meals have to be found by the girl out of her wages. Nearly all the girls are desired to be "respectable," and a large proportion must be "strong, clean, and active." Then there are the "persons," the greater number of whom seem to be desiderated as coffee-house attendants; and the "women," one of whom must be "Christian," and another "respectable old." If advertisements are any test, it seems abundantly plain that the laws of supply and demand are out of gear as regards servants, for there are but two advertisements from general servants in want of places, and not a girl, person, or woman proclaims through this medium her anxiety to obtain employment. The truth is, that an immense number of the women of London are becoming too independent for service, as well as too independent when in service. Other kinds of employment, often very well—seldom very badly—paid, present themselves in competition with domestic service; and imposing as they do less restraint on personal liberty, are better liked by very many. The girl who "works at a trade," as it is called, has her evenings to herself, can choose her own lodgings, do what she likes with her Sundays, and carries her character at her fingers' ends. How multitudinous are these occupations for girls, the advertisements in the Clerkenwell News tell us. Artificial florists are in extensive request, whether they be "leaf hands," "preparers," "common hands," "improvers," "pattern makers," or "cutters;" whether in-door or out-door, it is all one, and there is not a word about character. Constant employment appears to await any number of fancy box-makers, whether their forte be "glue work," "scoring," "lining," or "gold-edging;" braiders and button-hole makers, and chenille net-makers are eagerly inquired for. If anything like decent wages are to be made at chenille net-making, it is a wonder half the world does not take to it, for it seems that a competent knowledge of the handicraft is to be taught in an hour, and then abundance of work is guaranteed. Contrary to general belief, crinolines are not yet extinct, for we find crinoline makers advertised for, and also "good steelers." Plenty of employment is open in the dyeing business, whether for "fur hands," "feather hands," or "ironers." An epaulette embroiderer, if a first-rate hand, need not be out of work an hour; and offers to envelope folders and cementers are neither few nor far between. A glossary is needful when we light upon advertisements for "floss vulture" hands, and for a forewoman over "rose hands," but there is no ambiguity in the one which offers employment to "frizette and head-dress hands." Is another red-shirt legion being organised, that we read of "Garibaldi hands" being wanted? And if so, what is the hidden meaning of the mysterious word "print" that follows within brackets? "Half-cap hands"—who make the other halves?—"hat sewers," "infants' millinery hands," "imitation infants' leghorn hat hands," "in-

fants' blond loop front hands," "ironers," and "knickerbocker hands," are all in request; "fifty ladies' hat hands" are wanted in one batch, and the wrath of male tailors ought to be stirred up by an advertisement for a young lady to learn the "best waistcoat making." As to some desiderated "mackintosh hands," there is no stipulation that they should be clanswomen from the Highlands of Inverness, and "night-cap hands" are not called upon to state whether the materials they habitually use are lawn or hot grog with lemon and nutmeg. When "sewers" are advertised for, it seems superfluous to add "needle and thread" within brackets, but no doubt the seeming redundancy has some trade meaning of its own. In connexion with shirts, there is no mystery about a demand for "regatta hands," but what branch of shirt-making comes within the sphere of "good toppers, indoor" is as difficult for an outsider to the profession to comprehend, as it is to know what "fanners" have to do with stay-making. The tie trade seems to be very short handed, and to have numerous ramifications. We find under this head advertisements for "slip-stitchers," for "band and front hands," "knot hands," "Pall Mall hands," "Beaufort hands," Regent hands," "Brother Sam hands," "reversible hands," "eureka hands;" and one for "those who can take all parts." Then there are advertisements for umbrella hands who must be good "tippers and bracers;" for valentine hands, who, if accustomed to sachets, can earn, it seems, ten shillings to twelve shillings per week; wax-flower hands, and milliners, dressmakers, and tailoresses, general and special, for a column and more. Advertisements under the heading of "sewing machinists, &c., wanted," take up another column. It seems tweed hats can be made with the sewing machine; and an advertisement for an "excelsior embroiderer" is surely calculated to stimulate a keen curiosity to see the aspiring damsel fulfilling such a remarkable requisition. Female labour is certainly in greater demand than male, if we are to accept the advertising columns of the Clerkenwell as any criterion. A column and a half suffice to set forth the requirements under the heading "mechanics, &c., wanted," and a good many of the advertisements are not particularly inviting. Similarly, under the heading "situations and employment wanted," very few women are found advertising, while there are quite two columns of what me may call male advertisements, some very pregnant with signs of the times. Look at this one, for instance: "Employment wanted; tall, active, gentlemanly man; rapid writer; age twenty-five, wages one pound per week; understands books." Tall, active, and gentlemanly—pricing himself at one pound a week, and ready, probably, to jump at an offer of fifteen shillings! Never learnt a trade, you see, but took the other line—run off the rails somehow, and the "gentlemanly man," who is a rapid writer, and understands books, is eager for half the wages that big Jack, the navvy, who puts his cross on the pay-sheet instead of his name, is tearing out of the earth with pick and spade. Boys are in very active request, for the most part at what seem fair wages; but some of the employments for which they are required are not easily intelligible except to experts. We start as we read the following: "Boy wanted, used to vice," but light is let in by the sequel—"and hammer." Can this be a cracksman who is advertising for a "boy used to filing and drilling"? There is an advertisement for a "lad who has been on the bench," and another for a "youth who has been at the bar;" but we fail to find one for a youngster who has been "in the dock." Surely a covert insult to the profession lurks in this advertisement: "Boot trade—a youth wanted for the press." Is it possible that a zeal for economy has led the Lords of the Admiralty to advertise under a feigned name for a "monitor, from five shillings weekly"? Monitors, we know, are not thought much of now as war vessels; but then look at the figure!

It is inexplicable that we should ever hear of any one being out of business, unless by reason of absolute distraction at the plethora of eligible chances offered to the public, in some cases for making a fortune at a stroke, in none for doing worse than gaining a comfortable livelihood. A free beer-house may be had for thirty pounds, "all at," whatever may be the meaning of that spasmodic ellipsis. A butcher may have "the best opening in Bayswater" for the value of the fixtures; and we find "a cat's-meat walk for sale, doing six cwt. per week." There can be no mistake about this earthly paradise: "Fish-shop (neat little fried and dried) to let: shop, parlour, two bedrooms, back wash-house, &c.; coming in five pounds;" and there is a touch of genuine pathos in the statement that "the cause of letting is through ill-health of the wife." This is

definite; but there is a mournful mysterious vagueness about the following, that would seem to call for the interference of the authorities, but for the circumstance that the figures seem to afford evidence that, spite of affliction, reason is not yet tottering on its throne: "General, sweets, twelve pounds; rent fourteen shillings, let off eight and sixpence, affliction of proprietor." A "ladies' middle-class day-school," which is vouched for as a genuine transaction, is to be had for twenty-five pounds; a soup-shop in a business neighbourhood for twelve pounds; and a comprehensive concern described as a "music, news-agent, and tobacco business," must be dirt cheap at forty-five pounds.

But the pick of the paper is to be found in the curious miscellaneous reading under the heading, "to be sold." The oddest things are advertised for sale; and could we see behind the scenes of which the sixpenny advertisement, hard, dry, and laconic, is the curtain, the smile that the perusal of it may haply raise would surely give place to the gravity of sincerest sympathy. Such an advertisement as this is the index to a very bitter pass: "Bible (family devotional), illustrated, for sale." The children's birthdays may be recorded in it, but it must go; and if it finds a purchaser the wedding-ring of the wife and mother may be respected a little longer. "Duplicate, fourteen yards of rich Magenta silk, and gold and amethyst necklace, pledged this month for thirty-five shillings; ten shillings for the duplicate." This does not read like a "duffer," somehow; and it requires no ingenuity to picture to the mind's eye the sudden vicissitudes that may have enforced the sacrifice. Who that could help it would advertise for sale his or her "parrot, fine grey talking, very gentle," or such a cherished relic as "a pair of Lord Byron's duelling pistols"? Has the old stroller got too feeble to attend the village fairs, and take his stand of a Saturday night in Whitechapel, or has he made money and gone in for a bigger thing, that we find advertised, "a very pretty portable show, the 'Mermaid's Cave,' price two pounds"? What but necessity can exact the sale of "a mackintosh for carmen, cheap, a bargain seldom to be met with"? Norwich canaries can be heard in full song; cocks five shillings, hens one and sixpence, which difference in price is an insult to femininity; or if the investor would prefer a "dissolving view, apparatus complete," he can be accommodated. Dripping, warranted good, may be had in two places, and there is a recondite instrument for sale cheap, in the shape of an "alamode potato cutting-machine." Goats, lathes, mangles, microscopes, and mills, are all advertised for sale in this column; and for a neat assortment of "sundries," it would be difficult to beat this: "Gas cooking-stove, if needed, for one hundred persons; butter block and scale complete; mahogany sideboard, single gun, two bedsteads, looking-glass, patent sausage machine." Or this: "Bradford's washing machine; a large club-room mahogany table; a small quantity of vulcanite; a French velocipede; slate bagatelle table; and two large gin vats."

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

FRENCH BRIGANDS—LES CHAUFFEURS.

On a dark December night, in the year 1797, twenty-nine brigands, or chauffeurs, as they called themselves, assembled at a great gipsy feast of stolen poultry in the heart of the forest of Lifermeau (in the district of Orgères), to plan an attack on a rich farmer named Fousset, at Millouard. It was reported about Chartres that Fousset was one of the "Black Band," who bought up the deserted châteaux of the fugitive or guillotined aristocrats; that he had coffers full of louis-d'or, and chests crammed with linen and plate. The greedy eyes of the murderous scoundrels glittered at the prospect of such spoil.

The next night the robbers set out about eleven o'clock for the farm at Millouard. The leader of these vagabonds was a man named Girodet, generally known as Le Beau François. Originally an itinerant seller of rabbit-skins, he had succeeded the former chief, Fleur d'Epine, who had perished in the massacres of September, as ruler of the band equally dreaded by the travellers of Chartres, Orleans, Pithiviers, and Etampes. He was a tall, handsome fellow of about thirty, with good complexion and blue eyes. The second in command among these marauders was Thomas Roncin, alias the Big Dragoon, a ferocious man with a red beard, who had first been a cattle-dealer, then a soldier in the Queen's Dragoons. In serious expeditions he usually carried a musket, a sabre, and a pair of pistols. The rest of the band preferred loaded bludgeons, but there were two muskets among them, one of which had a bayonet, the other was double-barrelled. On arriving under the walls of the farm-house, a man named Duchesne

was sent out to reconnoitre. In slinking round the house, Duchesne saw a light at a loophole. Climbing a tree he looked in and saw three men, one of whom was counting money. These men were Fousset, his son, and a notary, who had come to receive some money for a mortgage, and was sleeping at the farm. As Duchesne slid down from a tree some dogs in the court-yard barked. A shepherd whistled, and Duchesne heard a door open, and the clatter of sabots. The spy returned and made his report. "We must wait an hour," said Beau François. At the end of an hour Beau François went to reconnoitre. The light was out; he whistled softly, and the band joined him; but all at once a dog flew at the door, sniffing and barking. Presently the notary's dog roused the farm dog, and the two barked furiously all night at intervals. "No good," said the chief, and the attack was postponed till the 14th of January. About twenty-six armed scoundrels assembled on that night by different routes in the forest of Goury. They started at nine o'clock at night and surrounded Millouard, according to strict military tactics. A pistol fired by Beau François was the signal of attack. A field-roller, swung as a battering-ram by six of the brigands, shattered the court-yard gate. The second door was stove in with equal ease. The farmer and his family had already, in their abject terror, fled to the stable and barricaded the door. The robbers, leaving a vedette at the front door, and sentinels outside the walls, rushed into the house shouting, "Forward; thirty of you here, forty there," to give an exaggerated impression of their numbers. The next moment the barred stable-door was dashed open, and the gang rushed in with threats and curses, one of them carrying an ominous red-hot coal and a wisp of straw. The moment the door gave way the farmer and his son and the servant-girl had hidden themselves in the stable litter. The chauffeurs drove them out by pricking them with knives and bayonets. One of the thieves, his knife between his teeth, wanted at once to cut their throats, but Beau François cried very considerately:

"And the yellow boys, Sans Pouce, who will tell us then where they are hidden? No, we must have a talk with the old man."

In the mean time the two other servants were hunted for, in the dread of any fugitive giving the alarm. The carter, trying to pass into the road by a hole in the stable wall, was driven back by the blows of a cudgel; he then hid himself in the manger under some horse-collars, and was there caught. The shepherd, burrowing in the hayloft, was pricked out and thrashed back to the stable. All safe now, so the gang chose the oldest, and weakest, and richest to talk to. Le Père Fousset, garotted, and with his cotton cap drawn down over his nose, so that he should recognise no one, was cudgelled into the parlour, where, his legs being tied, they threw him on the ground. The wretches lighting wisps of straw passed them quickly over the body of the old man.

"Where is your money?" they shouted. "Quick, if you do not want to be put on the spit."

The poor man, blinded, sore with blows, and nearly suffocated with smoke and flame, had no heart to reply. Then half stripping him, and taking off his shoes and stockings, the chauffeurs scorched the naked flesh till he screamed in agony.

"Cry out as much as you like, but tell us where the money is," said Le Beau François.

"There are three hundred francs in the little bureau in the kitchen," moaned the old man.

The bag was found in the place indicated.

"Now the rest," roared Le Beau François; "you won't make us believe that you haven't more. There are at least twenty thousand francs."

The miserable man made a gesture of denial.

"You won't speak!" cried the enraged chief. "Then warm him, my children."

Again they lit the straw, and blazed it over him. As he still uttered only half-stifled groans, they drew out a long sharp needle and pierced the soles of his feet, and passed the flame over the wounds of this martyr of Mammon. Still no confession could be burnt out of him. In spite of all their cruelty, nothing more could be found. In vain they ripped mattresses and feather beds, and split open cupboards and chests of drawers. In his insane rage, Le Beau François trampled on the half-dead man, and, regarding him as a mere worthless corpse, threw on him a heap of ripped-up beds and counterpanes. Then, tying the clothes and linen in bundles, Le Beau François whistled together his men from the court and the stable.

"We had better settle with these," said one of the gang, pointing to the three

farm-servants and the girl; "I don't like leaving godfathers and godmothers behind us."

The gang, opening the trap-door of the cellar, now thrust in Bernard Fousset, the old man's son, the carter, and the shepherd. Catherine, the maid, who stayed behind, paralysed with terror, was hurled down the steps headlong by Borgne le Mans, one of the most brutal of the band, amid shouts of cruel laughter. Le Beau François and Le Gros Normand barred up the trap, and loaded it with casks of flour. The troop then formed in two files—the men with muskets preceding, and Le Beau François, Sans Pouce, and Le Gros Normand guarding the rear. They passed the houses of Pourpry, and made for the wood. There they divided the spoil. They lit a bivouac fire of dead boughs, threw their old shirts and rags in the flames, and put on the clean linen from the farm; the clothes were equally shared, and the silver cups, bowls, shoe-buckles, and brooches set apart for sale at the receivers, near D'Angerville. As he stretched himself to sleep, Le Beau François muttered, "That old rascal of a Fousset robbed us after all."

In spite of all the tortures heaped upon him, the old farmer was not dead. Recovering from his swoon, and hearing no sound, he tried to disengage himself from the superincumbent load. He succeeded by a terrible exertion, and, by the dim light of the almost burnt-out embers, seeing that the feather bed covering him still smouldered, he tore it from him with his teeth. His hands were tied, but the flames had burnt through the cords round his feet and thighs, and he raised himself with pain on his bleeding feet. Crawling to the door, he called out, in a feeble voice, "Bernard, Bernard!" No voice replied. "They have killed him." He crawled on to the outer door, supporting himself by the walls. There was no light in Pourpry, no light on the plain; the night was gloomy and dark. He tried to reach the cottage of a labourer, about a hundred yards from the farm. What an hour of agony! A hundred yards; it seemed twenty miles. Often he fell, for his feet were swollen and sore, and his thighs were blistered, and almost fleshless. His breath, too, failed him, and it seemed as if his very lungs had been laid open. After midnight he reached the labourer's door. He called, but his voice was too weak to be heard. Collecting all his strength, he rolled his body into the doorway, and struck the door with his head. At length the labourer's wife came with a candle and found the miserable man half dead on the threshold. With the help of a neighbour, the good woman unbound the old farmer, dressed his feet, and put him on a bed. At daybreak the two women, taking a lantern, went to the farm and released the imprisoned farm-servants. The next day they went to seek a justice of the Canton d'Artenay. The officers arrived, and found the straw and the beds still smouldering. A surgeon found the old man dying; his legs below the knee almost roasted; the chest terribly burnt. He expired eight days after the robbery, of his wounds. The only traces the thieves had left behind them were two old three-cornered hats, a pair of iron-heeled sabots, a pipe, and an old blouse. These things were carefully guarded by the gendarmes.

There was nothing more dreadful in the attack on Fousset than in dozens of other crimes perpetrated by the same band, and the state of things had now become intolerable. The small farmers were afraid to combine, and the country people were too often in league with the thieves. Severe measures were rendered necessary. The wound that cannot be healed must be cut out. Suchy, the commissary of Chartres, found a stern and staunch lieutenant in a simple maréchal des logis of gendarmes, Pierre Pascal Vasseur. This man was a resolute and untiring pursuer. He seemed to take as much pleasure in choking a brigand as a good terrier does in killing a rat. To ferret out these vermin, and to introduce them to the guillotine, was the one end and aim of his restless life. This was not his first hunt; some years before he had cleared the forest of Senonches with fire and sword. He knew the habits of the brigands and their motley language, old as the wars of the League. The National Guards were utterly useless. That was visible at the very outset. On the 17th of January a detachment had orders to search on the farm of Stas, in the canton of Bazoches les Gallerand, for seven or eight suspected beggars, among whom was Sans Pouce, one of Fousset's torturers. The distrustful rustic soldiers, whose muskets were rusty, and some of them without flints, were mocked by the sturdy beggars, whose cudgels they shunned. "Tell your master," said Sans Pouce, to the farmer's milk-maid, "that if he is afraid of his crowns we will take care of them."

But the daring rascals did not long defy

justice. Vasseur, surrounding the suspected region, drawing his nets in narrowing circle after circle, sending out his spies and scouts from farm to farm, striking every bush, probing every wood, chatting with farmers, carters, and vine-dressers, met at last with two shepherds and a farm-girl who had seen the suspected beggars in the wood of Goury, about a league and a half from Fousset's farm. There the ashes of their bivouac fires were found, and some huts and shelters they had constructed. The farm-girl told the keen gendarme that three days before the sack of Millouard she had seen Jacques d'Etampes and others of the gang pass by in rags. Eight days after, she saw them again pass well-dressed, and Jacques d'Etampes had on a red carmagnole handkerchief, ornamented with cannons and caps of liberty. He took off this, flourished it before the girl, who admired it, and offered it to her for a "beau louis-d'or."

The girl mocking him, Jacques untwisted the handkerchief and showed her a louis tied up in one corner.

"I gained that," he said, "at the last harvest."

In a stable of a farm in the canton of Orgères, Vasseur and his men found a beggar-woman and her husband. They had no passports, and were at once arrested. The man, Germain Bouscaut, alias Le Borgne de Jouy, aged twenty-eight years, had been for nine years one of the most dreaded chiefs of the Orgères band. After some reticence he made the fullest and minutest revelations of the names of all his infamous companions, and drew up a complete and terrible list of their various crimes.

"You seek," he said to Vasseur, "the assassins of Millouard. I was there. I have never been a murderer, but I was compelled to associate with these men, or they would have killed me. There are one hundred and twenty men, and nearly as many women. They scour all the plain of Beauce, from the high road from Orléans to Paris, as far as the great road from Châteaudun to Epernay, the plain Gâtinais, the plain of Gomert, and the plain of Picardy. Most of them wear round slouched hats, woollen caps, or three-cornered hats à la militaire. They seldom have visible weapons, but they carry short, heavy bludgeons. The assassins of Fonsset you will find near Pithiviers, in such and such farms, but you must go in force, or you'll very likely never return."

Vasseur was close upon them. In the house of detention at Chartres he found a young man of St. Brigaud, one of the gang who had been wounded in 1796, after attacking a farm. They also captured Le Borgne Quatre Sous, who had joined Rouge d'Auneau in a murder and robbery, in 1797, of a poor schoolmaster and beadle named Lampe Trop. In the prison of Neuville they met with the notorious Rouge d'Auneau, again in trouble for not having a passport. It was now resolved to filter all the prisons between Chartres and Orléans, to discover the dregs of the Orgères gang, who were constantly being arrested. Vasseur found an honest, brave, and unflinching coadjutor in Armand François Fougeron, the magistrate and head of the police for the Canton Orgères at Ville-Prevost. The captain commandant of the National Gendarmerie for the Department of the Eure and Loire put at the disposal of Vasseur as many detachments as he might need, and lent him in addition the hussars quartered at Chartres and Neuville.

From the deserters of the band Vasseur gradually obtained the fullest details. The bands of robbers that in Cartouche's time had infested the forests near Paris, Rouvray, Bondy, and Senart, had gradually been driven into the woods of the Isle of France, Beauce, Berry, and Picardy. In a vast triangle formed of the three departments now known as Eure and Loire, Loire and Cher, and Loiret, these robbers ruled supreme. The woods were large, the plains rich, and scantily inhabited. Vast caves, the quarries of mediæval churches and fortresses, natural or artificial retreats, known to the brigands by traditions, served to shelter their families and conceal their spoil.

The chauffeurs formed an organised association. They had their curé, an old Norman mason, who in a priest's dress performed the mock marriages. Their schoolmaster and lawyer, Jacques de Pithiviers, was an old carter who had been a clerk to a procureur. He taught the children and lads how to plan and carry out a robbery, and when to use violence judiciously. Their patriarch, Le Père Elouis, was an old villain eighty years old, who had known the survivors of Cartouche's gang. It was he who had revived the cruel torture by fire of more barbarous times. The surgeon Baptiste gained access to farms as a quack and juggler. These brigands had also their spies who became farm servants, and who ran away and rejoined the band when they had obtained the required information. In all the towns and villages

round the forest in which they lurked there were receivers, who bought their plunder. Their chief cave was in a wood near Goudreville. This huge vault, approached by intricate paths, was one hundred feet long and thirty wide. The entrance, hidden by bushes, could be closed on the inside by a massive bar of iron and a very strong secret lock. You descended into this cave of Roland by a flight of sixteen steps. The huge hearth had a chimney up which any one could escape with ease, and its outer orifice was concealed by a growth of thorn-bushes and brambles. This place was the pandemonium of the chauffeurs, and there they held their shameless orgies. Their bank and store-house at Apreux was kept by an old hag whom they called La Bonne Mère d'Apreux. Her cellars were honeycombed with secret passages, and in her chests she kept stolen goods and assorted parcels of money, the property of her various clients. Their council chamber was a rough hut in the forest of Muette. The chauffeurs, beside their other officers, had their surgeons, their barbers, and their tailors, who could make disguises and alter costumes. The gang had certain receivers, who sold the cattle and sheep-dogs they stole, and they had other agents at Chartres who procured passports when necessary. Coiners also worked for them, so complete was their organisation.

From the deserters he had enlisted, Vasseur obtained a detailed list of the various crimes the Orgères gang had committed. They had attacked a farm in the Valley of St. Cyr-en-Val. There they stole thirty thousand francs, one hundred and thirty-one louis, and some church plate, and tortured the servants. For this robbery two of the gang afterwards suffered at Chartres. Soon after this the chauffeurs broke into a house at Montgon, killed the farmer, his wife, and a carter in a cruel manner, and carried off a hoard of louis that had been hidden in a pot of lard. In March, 1796, the same band robbed and killed a farmer at Grillons. A few days later they tortured a farmer's daughter, and a woman of the gang, La Grande Marie, disguised as a man, stabbed a farmer and his wife; but as the catalogue of the chauffeur murders and assassinations would fill whole pages, let us pass on to the final destruction of these wretches.

Le Beau François, irritated at the pursuit of the gendarmes, had determined on striking a vigorous blow, and had planned the simultaneous burning and plunder of three farms. But first he resolved to attack the château of Faronville, the residence of a ci-devant abbé, near Toury. But already Vasseur was close upon his heels. At the farm of Goudreville he had arrested a beggar, who turned out to be the famous Sans Pouce, who confessed that he had been at Millouard, and soon after was captured, at another farm, Le Rouge d'Auneau. A few days later he laid hands on Le Borgne de Mans, who pretended to be a runaway man-of-war's man from Brest. One midnight, halting at an auberge at Artenay, Lambert, one of the gendarmes, laid down his loaded pistols for a moment on the chimney-piece. At one bound Le Borgne de Jouy seized the pistols, presented one at Lambert, and threatened death with the other to whoever opposed his flight. But in a moment Vasseur had slipped behind him, and crushed him in his arms till he dropped the pistols and begged for mercy. This unsuccessful attempt at escape brought on a fit of madness, followed by a collapse, that compelled Vasseur to tie him on a horse during the march. When his reason returned Le Borgne offered to help Vasseur, who had spared his life, to trap Le Beau François and all his gang at one swoop. They were to be found in a rendezvous in the forest of Meriville, in a place hitherto thought inaccessible. He would undertake to "pincer les marrons" in three movements. Vasseur's heart leaped up at this; the next morning his column of inquiry, avoiding the high roads, marched eighteen leagues. Defiling silently, and with extreme caution, along the woodmen's paths, he shunned the farms, and pressed towards the brigand camp. What he most feared was the chauffeurs taking alarm before his sabres were at them. Worn out at last, neither horses nor men could budge a foot further. By the advice of a spy, Vasseur reluctantly resolved to encamp for the night in a chestnut wood near a spring, and to resume the march an hour after midnight, when the brigands would be sunk into their first sleep.

At the appointed hour Vasseur, who disdained sleep, touched the sleeping men, and prepared for the march. The gendarmes rolled up their cloaks, muffled their sabres, and felted the horses' feet. Le Borgne de Jouy, Vasseur carried on his own powerful charger; and as they started on their march, the gendarme whispered in the rogue's ear:

"You understand, mon garçon, that I

risk my men's skin as well as my own. You will not, therefore, be surprised, if the affair fails through any fault of yours, that my first ball will be for you."

As long as they kept the road to Meriville, the track that led to the great forest, the hussars and gendarmes were able to ride two and two, in spite of the dim starlight; but Vasseur allowed no "éclaireurs," for fear of giving a premature alarm. As to his own troop being surprised he felt no fear. Arrived at the thicker part of the forest, each horseman dismounted, and with left hand on his pistol, and musketoon slung on his back, led his horse through the underwood the best way he could. After about a hundred yards the path began to grow rocky, and to ascend, with trees and thickets here and there, and precipices opening on either side. Vasseur went first, holding Le Borgne de Jouy with an iron grip under the left arm. After a quarter of an hour of this dangerous climb, Le Borgne de Jouy pointed out a path, and said, in a low voice:

"Regardez! there is the Devil's Leap."

The road that showed by the pale starlight was narrow, steep, and suspended between two yawning precipices. The stumble of a horse, a cry of pain, a whistle of treason, and all would perish. Two or three determined men well posted there could have kept all the hosts of Charlemagne at bay. Vasseur, at a glance, comprehended the situation. He returned to the brigadier of hussars, who followed his steps, and said:

"One by one every man and every horse follow where I tread. If the chaffeurs attack let every man make his horse lie down, and throw himself on the ground."

The road luckily soon became sandy; the horses' hoofs could not be heard. In ten minutes Le Sant du Diable was passed, and not a horse had slipped. The path now widened into a narrow plateau, commanding a gorge that seemed fathomless. A hundred feet below, a little to the left, Le Borgne de Jouy pointed to a faint red glare. It was the chauffeurs' camp, and Vasseur could have thrown a stone down into the bivouac fire. By the dim light Vasseur's eyes sparkled to see a great number of men stretched out with their feet towards the fire.

"Eh bien," said Le Borgne de Jouy, "have I kept my word?"

That moment Vasseur's hand closed upon the spy's mouth, while at a prearranged signal two men garotted and bound the thief, and threw him like a log at the foot of a tree.

"A mere measure of precaution, mon garçon," whispered Vasseur; "it is for your interest. If this coup does not turn out well, your comrades will never suspect the man they find here tied round like a sausage."

Two winding paths led down to the abyss. At the opposite side of the gorge were thick trees, and not the shadow even of a rabbit run.

"A regular mouse-trap," whispered Vasseur to the brigadier. "The fools have forgotten to guard the heights, but for that they could have carbonadoed us. Take half the men and wheel to the right. I'll move on the left, and then fall together on these rascals. No fire-arms. The sabre only. Leave up here six steady men, with muskets ready for the fugitives."

He then sent on his hussars; when he judged they had reached the required point, he dashed on at a gallop, followed by his gendarmes. In a moment they were on them. Le Beau François, recognisable at once by his great height, was first on his feet, pistol in either hand. The ready finger was on the triggers, when he heard the gallop of the hussars. Seeing at once that they were surrounded, he threw away his arms, crying, "I surrender." Le Gros Normand had already covered a gendarme, when Le Beau François cried, "Pa de betises!" and kicked him and the musket into the fire. In a moment the gendarmes and hussars had their hands on the rascals' throats and cords round their hands. The whole covey was caught at the one drag of the net. Day by day strings of sham beggars, sham pedlars, deserters, and jugglers were hurried to the prisons of Chartres. A celebrated receiver named Mongendre and his son were captured in a hut in the very heart of the forest of Orléans by six determined gendarmes, who had disguised themselves as wood-cutters.

Bit by bit, crime after crime of these assassins, who had for so many years devastated central France, came to the light. It was discovered that the chauffeurs formed a secret brotherhood, and that any disclosure of their plans was usually followed by the murder of the informer. On one occasion a boy-thief, Le Petit Garçon d'Etrechy, had been beaten to death for imprudently talking of a robbery. Le Beau François sentenced him to death, and as he was dying, Sans Pouce trampled on his head with his huge iron-shod sabots.

The body was not even buried. In 1791, Charles de Paris, Vincent le Tonnelier, and Beauceron le Blouse, bludgeoned to death a comrade for having helped an innkeeper against the gang. Franche Montagne, about the same time, was burnt to death for some petty reason, and his ears cut off and nailed to an adjoining tree, as a warning to his brothers. La Belle Nanette had a narrow escape, and La Dubarry, another lady of the gang, was nearly beaten to death for threatening, in a moment of passion, to denounce the savage Sans Pouce as a deserter. It was also found that Beau François, Sans Pouce, Beor, Marabon, and Charles de Paris, had been aided by two servants in a robbery at Levès, in May, 1795, when the farmer and his wife were strangled and robbed. Twenty-seven days Vasseur scoured the dangerous country, without taking off his clothes or laying down his sword. Every day he effected some fresh captures. In the three prisons of Chartres there were crowded nearly seven hundred chauffeurs, till dysentery broke out and thinned the black ranks. While awaiting his trial, Le Beau François escaped from the infirmary, into which he had got by shamming a fever. A sick man escaped with him, but was recaptured the next day, half dead, under a tree. A quarter of an hour after his escape, Le Beau François robbed a poor gardener of Chartres of three crowns twenty sous, and some bread.

Nearly two years after their first arrest the chauffeurs were solemnly tried at Chartres, one hundred and ninety-four witnesses being examined, the chauffeurs loudly protesting against any mere ignorant labourers being retained on the jury, and demanding lawyers and educated men.

Twenty of the men, and three of the miserable women, were condemned to death. When the sentence was pronounced, the chauffeurs seeing a movement among the gendarmes, imagined they were to be instantly shot where they sat, and leaping up in frenzy they tried to break through the bayonets, but were soon overpowered. Le Borgne de Mans, Rouge d'Auneau, Chat Gauthier, Sans Pouce, and Le Gros Normand were among these dregs. The spy of Vasseur, Germain Bouscant, alias Le Borgne de Jouy, was condemned to twenty-four years in irons. Hosts of others were sentenced to various terms in the galleys, where they spent the rest of their miserable lives. The old man, Père Elouis, the reviver of chauffage, Le Gros Beauceron, one of the assassins at Millouard, the sanguinary Quatre Sous, and Léjeune, the brigands' curé, had already perished either by fever or the guillotine. The twenty-three condemned members of the Orgères band perished with brutal courage on a scaffold in the market-place of Chartres.

The stragglers of the Orgères band joined the Vendéans, or escaped to the Lyonnais, Ardeches, or the Cevennes. Three were shot in attacking a diligence filled with disguised gendarmes, and four more condemned to death at Bourg. On the day of the execution these four ruffians, in some way or other getting rid of their irons, and obtaining cutlasses, defied the gendarmes. Two of the wretches were shot dead, and two who were wounded were led bleeding to death, and shouted blasphemies and ça ira till the axe fell.

On the return of Napoleon from Egypt in October, 1799, Fouché, who was then head of the police, crushed the last cubs of the wolf's brood. In forty-seven departments three hundred brigands were arrested, and a great number destroyed. In the Deux Sevres ten armed brigands were guillotined. The leader of these was Le Grand Gars. The most ferocious of his acolytes was one Girodet. This Girodet, whom we leave under a wayside tree with his skull cloven and his brutal face looking ferocious even in death, was our old friend of Orgères, the chauffeur captain, Le Beau François.

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XI. QUO FATA DUCUNT.

THE first bell had rung, and the huge locomotive, just filled, was leisurely backing from the water-tank towards the train to which it was to be coupled, as Philip Vane entered the Springside station. He found his knees trembling under him as he alighted from the fly which had picked him up on the Wheatcroft road, and felt that he should require all the nerve at his command to face the blaze of light and the bustling crowd spread over the platform. He had his return-ticket in his pocket, so that there was no occasion for him to enter the booking-office; but on his arrival he had left his travelling-coat and rugs in the

cloak-room, and he deliberated for an instant whether it would not be better to leave them there, rather than undergo the scrutiny of the porter. Suddenly, however, it flashed upon him that he could not recal the contents of his coat-pockets, and that there might be therein some card or memorandum, some envelope of a letter, which might lead to its recognition as his property, and be brought in as testimony of the fact that he had been in Springside on that fearful night. He must fetch them at all risks; and his brandy-flask, which he had emptied in the fly, must be refilled at the refreshment-stand.

The cloak-room, he was glad to find, was at the other end of the platform, away from the bustle and the glare. He went there, and found it occupied by two men: one a clerk, seated at a high desk at the far end, entering in a huge ledger the names of the articles which the other man, a porter, called out as he sorted them away. The clerk was working under a shaded lamp, and in comparative darkness; but two flaming gas-jets lighted the other portion of the room, one of them immediately above the large, square, open window at which Philip Vane stood, and handed in his ticket.

"Coat and rug, sir?" said the man, in his broad Somersetshire accent. "There you are, sir." And he placed the articles on the broad ledge before him. "Beg your pardon, sir," he added, pointing down to Philip's hand, outstretched to take them, "cut your knuckles, I think, sir?"

Philip glanced down at his hand, and saw that the back was stained and rough with blood; he was fully alive to the danger of showing the smallest sign of trepidation at that moment, so holding his hand towards the gaslight, he examined it coolly, and said, in as careless a tone as he could assume, "So I have; I could not get down the fly window just now, so broke it with my fist; but I had no idea my hand was cut."

"Bad thing them splinters of glass under flesh, sir," said the porter; "better let me wipe it for you with this damp cloth."

"No, thanks," said Philip; "there is the second bell ringing, and I am off by this train—much obliged." And with a friendly nod to the porter, he took up his coat and rug and hurried away. The wheels were just beginning to move as he jumped into an empty first-class carriage, and, wrapping himself in his rugs and pulling his travelling-cap over his eyes, tried to compose himself to sleep.

Throughout that journey, however, there was no sleep for Philip Vane. The whirling of the wheels beat into his brain, the scream of the engine sent his heart leaping in his breast, the light from the small stations flashing through the windows as the train dashed by them, startled him so, that he clutched the elbows of the seat convulsively, and leaned eagerly forward, in his endeavour to trace any sign of the diminution of their speed. No, onward and still onward they went. He remembered having ascertained that they only halted once—at Swindon—on the entire journey; but what if the discovery had been made? What if Madge had denounced him as the assailant? Would not the news be flashed along the line, and the train be stopped at some intermediate station in order that he might be arrested? Arrested! Let him fancy himself in that position, and think calmly through the case in all its bearings, in order to decide what course he should pursue.

When the old man recovered from his fit he would be able to describe the details of the assault made upon him, and to declare by whom and for what reason he had been attacked. Then would come out the story of the forgery, and then—— Philip Vane trembled from head to foot, as he thought of the punishment which the discovery of his commission of that crime would inevitably bring upon him. Before his mental vision at that moment rose the figure of his wife, and he ground his heel upon the carriage floor and cursed aloud. It was to her he owed all his ill-luck in life. If he had not married her he would have been free to marry Mrs. Bendixen, and Delabole would have had no power to compel him to commit the forgery; if he had not married her there would have been no reason for him to undertake that journey to Springside, and he would not have been brought into collision with that old man, whom he had been compelled in self-defence to strike. He had struck the old man, and the blood was still upon his hand. He moistened his handkerchief, and as he endeavoured to rub off the dull red mark, there rose, even in his hardened heart, a feeling of shame at having struck one so old and evidently so ill. "I could not help it," he muttered between his teeth, "he held me like a vice. A man with all that strength left in him won't take long in recovering. It was a mercy that he fainted,

and so set me free. Call in the aid of the police; a forger and a scoundrel, eh? That meant Irving's business, plainly. But how did he learn that? Asprey's orders, as to the old man's letters and telegrams being kept back, must have been disobeyed. Who could have done that? My charming wife again, I firmly believe. What could she be doing in that house? I noticed she had no bonnet on, and seemed quite at home. If she had anything to do with it, this infernal ill-luck would be fully accounted for. One week more would have done it: would have seen me married and rich, and well out of the reach of the police with whom the old man threatened me, and whom he will certainly set on my track so soon as he recovers. What's this? slackening speed now, without a doubt!" And he rose to his feet and peered anxiously out of the window, as the train ran from the outer darkness in amongst blocks of stationary carriages, past solitary engines with the outlines of the stokers standing black and weird against the glowing fires, and finally came to a standstill alongside the platform at Swindon.

Philip Vane started as the door was unlocked and thrown open, but the porter only made the customary announcement of the ten minutes' wait, and passed on. Vane looked round, observing but few passengers, who, for the most part, were hurrying to the refreshment-room. He followed them, drank two small glasses of brandy at the counter, and had his flask filled again. Then he returned to the carriage. As he was entering he felt himself touched on the shoulder, and, turning round, found at his elbow a guard, who demanded his ticket. They would not stop until they reached Paddington, the guard said, and the gentleman would not be disturbed again.

Another passenger was seated in the compartment, a middle-aged man, with a seal-skin cap and a fur rug. He had already hooked a reading-lamp into the lining of the carriage behind him, and was deep in the folds of an evening paper. So intent was he in his occupation, that he merely looked up for an instant as Philip entered, but shortly after the train had started he dropped the paper on to his knees and emitted a long whistle.

"Do you take any interest in the City, sir?" he asked, looking across at his companion.

"No—why?" was the curt reply.

"Because they are going it there, that's all," replied the man. "Egg-shells and cards seem about the materials which commercial houses are made of now-a-days, let alone companies limited, which are a pleasant combination of cobwebs and feathers. Two more suspensions announced this morning in the papers, sir. Consols fell three-quarters, and a general feeling of uneasiness prevalent. That'll touch us at Manchester, that will. Know anything of Manchester, sir?"

Philip Vane answered shortly that he knew nothing of Manchester, and the commercial gentleman, thus snubbed, betook himself once more to his newspaper, and when he had sucked it completely dry of all commercial information, he drew forth a fat black-leather pocket-book, by making entries in which, and reading over the entries already made, he beguiled the time until the end of the journey. Meanwhile, Philip Vane had again settled himself into his corner, and was deep in contemplation. The recurrence of the panic in the City, of which he had just heard, was another item against him. He had a vague idea of borrowing money from Delabole on the strength of his approaching marriage, and escaping with it to Spain or some other place little infested by Britons, where he could lie perdu until he had a chance of making his way to South America. There might be some difficulty in this now, for in this panic Delabole might be hard hit, even though he saw from the newspaper, which he picked up and glanced through, that Terra del Fuegos remained at the price at which he had left them.

As they sped on, innumerable projects arose in Philip Vane's mind, were thought over, put aside for further cogitation, or summarily dismissed: prominent among all the others came the idea that even when he was denounced as a forger, and when the fact of his former marriage was blazed abroad—two things certain to happen within the next few days, perhaps within the next few hours—even then Mrs. Bendixen might not desert him. She could not be his wife, it is true, but she loved him passionately, with a warmth and devotion unknown to paler, colder natures, with a hungry fervour which might prompt her to forgive the deception he had practised on her, and to fly with him to some place where they could live together beyond the reach of any of their former acquaintances. Or—for the brandy which Philip Vane had swallowed had but had the effect of clear-

ing his brain and steadying his nerve, and he calculated his chances with as much coolness and judgment as though another's fate and not his own were trembling in the balance—or supposing that Mrs. Bendixen in the contest between her position and her nature were to give way to the former, she would still have her money, money over which certain letters addressed by her to him, and carefully retained, would give him considerable control.

Yes, that was how it must be managed; the game of respectability was played out, the news of the forgery and of his intended bigamy would be promulgated at once, and there was nothing left for him but flight. He would have time enough after his arrival in town to get together his most valuable articles of property, and to start by an early train or boat to such destination as he might fix upon without his flying visit to London being heard of, and while his servants and people at the office would imagine that he was still absent on a business tour, on which he was known to have started. He would not see Delabole, he would not see any one; the cause of his flight would soon be perfectly apparent, and his enemies might then do their worst. He had sufficient money to take him to a place of safety, and then he would work the oracle with Mrs. Bendixen. Properly managed, his fate would not be such a hard one after all. But what a difference one week, even a few days, might have made! Had Asprey's calculations been fulfilled; had Sir Geoffry died at the time the doctor predicted, the forgery would not have been discovered; Madge could have been brought to terms; and as Mrs. Bendixen's husband, he, Philip Vane, would have had wealth and position, which were to him the only two things worth living for! As that bitterest thought of all "what might have been" crossed Philip Vane's mind, he stamped his foot with rage, thereby awaking the commercial gentleman, who, struggling into a sitting posture, and wiping the steam from the carriage window, muttered, "London at last!" and proceeded to pick up his newspaper and get his travelling-rugs together.

London! Now Philip Vane must have his wits about him, and be ready to carry into execution all that he has determined on. The porter who bustles about to get him a cab, eyes him, as he fancies, suspiciously, and he bids the cabman set him down somewhat short of his own house, in order that the address may not be remembered. It is comparatively early, not yet eleven o'clock, and being a bright night the streets are filled with people returning from the more sober entertainments, or the votaries of Saint Monday, who have been keeping their accustomed holiday. When these latter gather together in little chattering knots, as they do at almost every street corner where there is a public-house, Philip Vane looks out of the cab window at them, wondering what they are talking about; whether perchance the news of the assault had already reached town, and whether he might be the subject of their conversation. Some of the small shops, at once news-venders and tobacconists, which are still open, have the placard-bill of the contents of the evening papers exhibited at their doors, and Philip scans these eagerly, but finds in them no cause for fear. As he nears his home in the more aristocratic part of the town, he leaves all the noise and bustle behind him, and when the cab stopped as directed at the corner of the street, there was no one within sight. Philip alighted, and taking his rugs in his hand hurried to the Albany. He thought it would be useless to attempt to shirk the inspection of the gate-porter, but to his delight that functionary had temporarily yielded up his post to a deputy, who, unexcited by the novelty of his position, had dropped off to sleep, so that Philip passed by him and gained his chambers unobserved. As he opened the door with his latch-key, he recollected that he had given his servant a holiday, and he knew that he was not likely to come across any one else, for the men holding chambers in the same block were all out of town, and their housekeepers were only visible in the early morning.

Now then to work. In the outer hall were two or three trunks piled on each other. He selected the largest of these, and dragged it into the middle of the sitting-room; then he paused, undecided as to how he should commence his work of selection. The rooms had been furnished by a fashionable upholsterer, who had been told to spare no expense, and, as is usual with such people, had rendered them very handsome and eminently uninhabitable: wood of the finest grain, velvet of the softest texture, gilding of the brightest sheen, were there in abundance, but could not be taken away. They had cost much money and must be left behind. At one time, he had a notion of dismantling the shelves of the clocks, and the china orna-

ments, and the valuable nicknacks which were strewn about them; but on second thoughts he determined to leave them, fearing they would be missed by his servant on his return, and thus suspicion would be excited. Finally, he dragged the large trunk back into the hall, and fetching the portmanteau which he ordinarily used, commenced filling it with wearing apparel, carefully packing, too, his splendid dressing-case with silver-gilt fittings, and a quantity of plate which he took from an iron safe in his bedroom.

He had opened the door of this safe, and was looking through a number of documents, bills, and other securities, with the intention of seeing which could be made available in his flight, when he heard a sudden knock at the door. Not an ordinary knocking, but quick, hurried, and studiously low, as though the person knocking were fearful of attracting other observation than that of the person whose attention he was endeavouring to catch.

Philip Vane paused in his task and listened; his heart beat so loudly that at first he could not hear anything else, and after the knocking had ceased, for a minute afterwards he heard it distinctly. He filled a wine-glass from a decanter of brandy on the sideboard and swallowed its contents, then he crossed the hall and paused at the outside door.

"Who's there?" he asked, in a low tone.

"I," replied the well-known voice of Mr. Delabole, pitched in the same key. "Let me in at once—most important!"

Vane opened the door, and Mr. Delabole entered. He knew the way, he had been there often before, and, with his host following him, he rapidly crossed the little hall and passed into the sitting-room. When he saw the half-filled portmanteau and the room littered with clothes and papers, he started back and turned quickly round.

"Hallo!" he said, "so soon? I came to warn you, but you seem to have heard of it already."

"Heard of what?" said Vane, looking bluntly at him.

Mr. Delabole's face was pale; there was a strained, worn look round his eyes, his usual gorgeous shirt-front was crumpled, and his ring-covered little hands were very dirty; but it was with something of his old jaunty manner that he said: "Won't do, my dear Philip—things are too serious just now for us to indulge in such gaff. You must have heard the news, or you would not be packing up to cut and run in this way."

"I have this moment returned to town, and I tell you I have heard no news whatever."

"Well, then, not to keep you in suspense any further, the short and long of the matter is this. Late this evening, after business hours, I received a private telegram in cipher from Garcia, the resident engineer at Terra del Fuegos, and——" Mr. Delabole stopped and whistled.

"And," interrupted Philip Vane, who scarcely had noticed the announcement his companion had to make to him, so great was his relief.

"And," continued Mr. Delabole, looking hard at him, "the water has come into the mine, and it is all U—P."

"That's a bad business," said Vane, striving to look interested. "What do you intend to do?"

"Well, you are a plucked one, Philip, I will say that for you," said Mr. Delabole, in admiration. "You take this as coolly as though it were a trifle, instead of meaning ta-ta to every sixpence you have got in the world. To be sure there is Mrs. Bendixen's money in prospect, but one ought never to reckon upon that until one has touched it. And you ask me what I am going to do. I will tell you, my dear Philip, in a word of four letters—bolt!"

"Leave England?"

"Leave England very much indeed, for a short time. I had always arranged with Garcia that when this crisis happened—I knew it was always on the cards, having been told so by old Prothero, when he came back from his second visit and sold all his shares—I had arranged with Garcia to let me have forty-eight hours' notice before the news could reach the City in the regular way. If he keeps his word, and I have no doubt he will, the interesting occurrence will not get wind until Thursday morning, by which time we—if you decide upon accompanying me—can be the other side the Pyrenees, and well into Spain."

"Is there absolute necessity for your going?"

"Well, my dear Philip, when the T. D. F. bursts up, there will be rather a howl, and it will probably, too, be better for me to be out of the reach of certain speculative persons who may think they have been defrauded of their money. What an extraordinary fellow you are! You must necessarily make yourself scarce, and yet

you seem to be displeased with the notion of my company, which I thought would have afforded you the greatest delight."

"It is not that, of course; I should be glad of your society, but it's hard lines to have to run away into hiding just now."

"You can take Mrs. Bendixen with you, my dear Philip," said Mr. Delabole, sardonically. "She will not know that it is anything more than a mere commercial smash; and she will be doubly anxious to have the opportunity of concealing her own stricken deer. Besides, you might have had to bolt in a more hurried manner. Oh, by the way, I have news for you."

"What news?" said Vane, starting. "More trouble?"

"On the contrary," said Delabole, "good. Just before I came out, Asprey enclosed me this telegram, which he received to-night. Read it for yourself."

Mr. Delabole took an envelope from his pocket and handed it to his companion, who opened it eagerly, and spread out its contents before him. But he had scarcely glanced at the paper, when, with a heavy groan, he fell senseless on the floor.

Mr. Delabole was a practical man; he rushed into the bedroom, and emerging with the water-jug, dashed a stream over his friend's face; then dropping on his knees beside him, untied his neckerchief, unbuttoned his waistcoat and shirt, and lifted up his hand that he might feel how the pulse was beating.

What makes him drop the hand suddenly as though it had been red-hot, letting it fall heavily on the floor? What makes him bend over it again as it lies there doubled up and shapeless, and peer curiously at the cuff and shirt-wristband? What makes him shrink back, regaining his feet with one bound, and looking down with horror on the prostrate form?

"He did it," he muttered. "By the Lord!"

"What is it exactly the doctor says?" picking up the telegram which had fluttered to the ground. "'Chenoweth, Springside, to Asprey, Cavendish-square. Sir G. H. is dead. Killed to-night in a struggle. Particulars by post. Shall want you at the inquest.' Killed in a struggle; and unless I am very much mistaken, this is the man that killed him. What's the meaning of his falling into a fit when he read that? What's the meaning of those stains on his hands and cuffs and wristband? That was where he was all this day, when he would tell no one where he was going! And here are his boots and trousers still cased with the heavy country mud! What was the meaning of this packing up, which I interrupted him in? His plate and papers too, I see, to take with him. What did that mean but to bolt? This is an infernal bad business," he continued, dropping into a chair and wiping his forehead. "I wish to Heavens I had not come here!"

At this moment Philip Vane opened his eyes, and after gazing wearily round him, gradually struggled into a sitting posture.

"Help me to get up, Delabole," he said, in a faint voice. "Give me your hand."

"Not I," said Mr. Delabole, drawing back and plunging his hands into his pockets.

"What's the matter?" said Philip, still faintly. "What has happened?"

"This has happened, Philip Vane; that I know where you were during this day and what you did! Henceforth we work separate, and I advise you to keep clear of me. I don't pretend to be strait-laced; I am not particular as to how I get my money so long as it comes, but I have never gone in for murder yet, and I don't intend to do so. And look here; you know I am sound enough, but if you don't want others, who might not be quite so reliable, to find out what I have found out to-night, look to your coat-cuff, and shirt-wristband, and trousers, and boots, and be off out of this place, before the hue-and-cry is upon you."

So saying, without another look at his companion, Mr. Delabole put on his hat and strolled from the room, leaving Philip Vane grovelling on the ground.

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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XIX. GREAT MISTAKES.

"AUNT MARTHA," said May the next morning, "do you remember the pedlar?"

They were standing in the morning sun, looking over a sweet-brier hedge, in the direction of Paul's farm-house. Paul had invited himself to breakfast, and breakfast was now waiting for the guest.

"Of course I remember the pedlar," said Aunt Martha. "A most civil young man, who did not know his own interests. Has he turned up again?"

"I think he has," said May. "I think Paul Finiston and he are the same. That is why we got our silk so cheap."

"Nonsense!" said Miss Martha, in great consternation.

At this moment Paul appeared coming towards them. May had said, "To-morrow we shall see him better as he is." Now she had the early glory and freshness of the morning by which to criticise him; and something of that glory and that freshness seemed reflected in the young man's bearing as he approached. He was not quite a six-foot man like Christopher Lee, but he had a better knit frame, and was of a finer build. He had in his face a look of vivid, nervous life, keen in the eyes, sensitive about the mouth, warm and impetuous in the vigorous glow under the sunburnt skin; had more than the strength of most men, and almost the suppleness and grace of a woman. Yet with all the advantages of this happy moment for observation, May did not seem one whit more inclined to criticise than she had been the night before.

The small, dim parlour looked sweeter than ever that morning, with lowered blind, and open, rose-hung sash, and filled with a tempered sun-haze over all the little oddities and grotesquenesses of its shape and adornments. The people at the table were merrier and more familiar than they had been the night before.

"Paul," said Miss Martha, "this girl sometimes dreams when she is awake; just as some people walk about in their sleep. She dreamed this morning that she had seen you tramp the country as a pedlar."

"I did so once," said Paul, in some confusion. "I meant to confess it. You will think it was a foolish trick to play upon my friends."

The shock of Miss Martha's surprise was over before now. She had been studying Paul's face, and was not unprepared for the confession when it came.

"It seems foolish enough, but I suppose you had a motive. I knew there was something wrong about that silk. You remember, May, how uneasy I was."

"Aunt Martha thought the goods were stolen," said May, laughing, "and that we should have to go to jail."

Paul looked rather foolish, but joined in the laugh. "I meant no harm," he said. "It was nothing but a freak."

"Have you quite given up business?" asked May, blithely. "You had a great many pretty things unsold in your pack."

"The pack!" said Paul, recollecting. He had never thought of it since the moment when he had fled frantically out of the doors of Tobereevil; away from that fear and hatred of another human creature which had made him feel for an instant as if he might be a murderer against his will. All the old haunted feeling swooped back over him as he sat there,

and the sunshine seemed to vanish from the walls of the little parlour. He laid down knife and fork, and found that he could eat nothing more.

"I left the pack at Tobereevil," he said, with an effort at speaking lightly. "I quitted the place rather abruptly, and—forgot to bring my goods."

"Did—did he recognise you?" asked Aunt Martha, anxiously, seeing that some painful memory had laid hold of the young man.

"Oh, no, nothing of the kind. He received me very well. We made some bargains together. It was only that a panic seized me——"

"A panic?" said Miss Martha.

"A fit of panic to which I am subject. I had to run away." Miss Martha looked troubled, and May was in a puzzle. "Don't let us talk of it," said Paul, with a swift return of gaiety. "I have a longing to be happy awhile, before I settle down to look the future in the face. Humour me, dear madam. Give me a whole week."

"I will give you as many as you like," said Miss Martha, smiling, "only tell me how the gift is to be made."

"I want to see the country," said Paul. "I want to wander about gipsy fashion, and see the beauties of the land. If you and—and——"

Paul glanced pleadingly at the bright face opposite.

"May," said the girl, smiling.

Paul's face grew radiant. "If you and May," he said, "will come with me, if you will trust yourselves to my care, I think we can have some pleasant days."

The young girl's eyes flashed delight; but Aunt Martha's cap began to bob in deprecation.

"You have never had the rheumatism, either of you," she said; but nevertheless she promised in the end to do her best to turn traveller, for the sake of these two.

So this little party set out to do what people so seldom think of doing. They contrived a tour of pleasure in their own country. They went driving leisurely along unknown roads, seeing fine sights, and arriving by sun-down at sequestered inns, in romantic byplaces of extraordinary beauty. They mounted ponies, at least two of them did, for Miss Martha would have nothing fiercer than a donkey. They climbed mountains, they sat upon wonderful crags, they floated about lakes in the blue atmosphere of enchanted days, and they looked at each other through the spray of the great waterfalls. The week lengthened itself into a bewitching fortnight. And even after that time had passed many more rosy days still dawned and set, and left them wandering.

The acquaintance of the young people ripened well during this time. Aunt Martha's donkey was an obstinate brute, and was always taking sulky fits and lagging behind the ponies. Aunt Martha did not much fancy boating upon lakes. The young people had many a quiet hour in which to learn each other off by heart. Paul was extravagantly happy. He was companion, mentor, and often guardian of this girl whom he loved solely and passionately, loving no one else in the world. But by-and-bye, out of the fever of his delight, he got a great new fear which outweighed all else that had ever troubled him before. He fought with it awhile, vowing that he would win that thing on which he had set his heart. He was not a coward, he thought, though hard beset with shadows which threatened to darken his whole life. He had an arm fit to wield a sword, or to break stones on the highway, a heart ready to grapple with any substantial danger which might confront him. But it seemed to him that nature had given him no refuge from the plague of his imagination, had given him over to the malice of the creatures of his bad dreams. Nature had offered no refuge, but he had found one for himself in another human soul. And now—if he should lose her?

As for May, when her observation of certain sad fits of Paul's had reminded her that he had a trouble, she found herself not so well able to pity him as she had fancied she should be. If Katherine had treated him hardly, why not let the past go to the winds? What was there about her so precious that she should be mourned for all through life? She was frivolous and foolish; but a man might not see that. Yet why not enjoy the lovely summer while it stayed? Why look on the ground and sigh, and turn silent and pale while the world was all in a glow, and full of joy on every side? She had no patience with such blindness. For her part she believed that people ought to be happy when they could. Death and parting were sad enough when they came. But when people were well, among birds singing and flowers blooming, they deserved to be miserable if they would not try to be a little glad. One thing she would do for him, and she did it with all her might. She would avoid

the slightest mention of Camlough and its belongings. And she kept this resolution so well that she made mischief. She got a nervous dread of mentioning Katherine or her lover. But Paul forced her to mention them in the end.

I have said that Paul Finiston was in the habit of talking to himself in a note-book. It could not be called a diary, for he did not write in it every day. He had been too busy in his foreign life for the enjoyment of such a regular indulgence. Yet he was a man so full of fancies, and moods, and unrealities, that there were times when it was a relief to pour them out in black and white. He used to say to himself that these jottings helped him along his life in the way of common sense. He could look back and laugh at his odd humours, and take measures to hinder their return. But if nature has learned a trick it is not easy to keep her from playing it.

Paul returned to his note-book in the little tourists' inn.

"I have been unutterably happy," he wrote, "but now I have got a new devil to torment me. It is hard to understand how a man's mind can be so changed in a few weeks. It is little more than three since my old enemy drove me back over the hills, and I went, leaving her to a future from which I excluded my own life for evermore. Now, if I were so urged, I would take all risks, and I would not go, unless further driven by some sign from her. The fears which were so lively when the enemy let them loose upon me are gone on the winds, and come near me no more. I have only one fear: that she will give herself away from me.

"When I loved her less I had no dread of failing to win her love. I don't think it was quite as a coxcomb that I said to myself that I would try to do it within this holiday month. It seemed to me that her life must have been such a child's life, that she must still be such a child. I thought her past was a white path, and that my own and her Aunt Martha's were the only full-sized shadows that had been cast upon it. I had liberty and opportunity to woo the shy yet frank and unconscious creature, and woo her I would, with all urgency and devotion. There was no one to interfere with me, for the mountains do not seek mates, and though the trees might be in love with her, they had to suffer in their dumbness. So that unless she hated love and worship, and the tender care of a life given up to her, I had a fair chance of winning her to be the angel of my life.

"So I let my love have full sway, neither checked it nor stinted it in hopes and present delights. I waked in the morning and said, 'In an hour I shall see her face, and perhaps she will give me her hand; not for life, indeed, but for a happy moment. She will dazzle me with the morning sunshine of her eyes—

> Sweetest eyes were ever seen,

and her mouth will be smiling like a half-open rose. Her very gown will have the freshness of an uncrumpled rose-leaf, and I will give her roses with the dew on, which she will wear in her bosom. I shall meet her blooming in open air in the cool of the morning, delighting the early sun, and putting all the flowers to shame. At a distance I shall compare her to the wet blossoms in my hand, but when she sees me I shall discover that she has a beauty which they lack. For the rose cannot change colour with that variety which is the charm of her young face. I shall live all day by her side. She will address to me her quaint remarks, and laugh at me with her laugh which makes me merry whether I will or not. I shall say to her what I please, for nothing is too odd to amuse her, and I think she likes to be puzzled. I shall ask her questions, drawing out her opinions on this matter and that, and the answers will be so original that it is of no use for me to speculate on what they are likely to be. I shall enjoy all this from morning till night, and then see many more of such days before me; how many I do not care to count, for I have hopes that the future may be in itself a great treasury of them. I shall breathe in bliss with the common breath of life, because I have found a creature both soft and wise, both keen-witted and simple, to be loved apart from the world with an only and perfect love.'

"But my raptures and self-gratulations have been a little premature.

"Yesterday we sat together, she and I, in a rainbow among the mists of the great waterfall. She looked like some slim water-nymph in her limp muslin gown, all damped and clinging with the dews from those mists. I had seated her on a mossy slab of stones, with my cloak about her feet for protection from the wet. An ash-tree from the rocks above had laid some clusters of its red berries upon her shoulders, and hung more like fantastic tassels about

her head. We had walked a good deal, and she was tired, showing it in that delicate paleness which sometimes spiritualises her face, and in an unusual tenderness and duskiness of the eyes. It strikes me as a sample of that egotism which is a part of myself, that I then and there for the first time thought of asking her about the events of her life. I had claimed her wonder, her sympathy, and she had seemed to give it all willingly, so willingly that I had poured out more and more of the rubbish of my own mind and experience into her ears. But I had been content to gather from her comments, her longings, and puzzles, and fancies, and beliefs. I had not asked what she had seen, what she had heard, whom she had met.

"I said as we sat there, 'I have told you a great deal about myself. Will you now tell me a history of your life; your life from the date of the grey pelisse?'

"She laughed; with that little sob of ecstatic glee at the climax of her laugh.

"'As well ask to hear the history of a squirrel or a rabbit,' she said. 'I have been as wild and as happy as one or the other, and my life has been as monotonous and uninteresting as theirs. It is years since there was an event in my life; until——'

"'Until when?' I asked eagerly, as she hesitated, hoping that she would say 'until you arrived.'

"'Until my visit to Camlough,' she said, with a slight contraction of embarrassment in her eyes, which were averted from mine as she spoke. She gazed before her with that effort not to look at me but to look at something else, which seemed to plead not to be questioned, and yet which urged me intolerably to question. A sense of unshaped trouble darkened my mind, a shadow of uneasy, incredulous bewilderment, such as I remember to have felt before when there was a vague, cruel rumour about the failure of our bank; our bank which held our credit between its finger and thumb.

"'Ah!' said I, with a sudden jealous interest in the subject, 'I should like to hear of Camlough. You have never told me one word of the things that happened there. Is Miss Archbold still as beautiful as a Greek goddess? You see I also know her. And are you and she the tenderest of friends?'

"'Miss Archbold told me of your meeting,' said she, in a hurried way; 'and I don't think we could ever be called friends,' she added, with a sudden flash of fire dancing across her sweet eyes.

"'They have quarrelled,' I thought. 'About what, about whom?' I was now all alive to hear more about Camlough.

"'Who were your company?' I asked, 'and had you a very gay time? Had you anything or any one to interest you?'

"'Not quite a gay time, and yet I had a great deal to interest me, enough for——'

"'Enough for what?' I asked, becoming savagely impatient, yet dreading in my jealousy to hear mention of a third name.

"But she blushed ruby red, and would say nothing more. It may be that she was displeased, and thought me brutally rude, but there was something more than anger under that blush.

"'Were there any other visitors besides yourself?' I asked again.

"'There was a gentleman called Mr. Christopher Lee,' she said, and the colour which paled from her face rushed back again. We had come to the point at last. Mr. Christopher Lee.

"'A young gentleman?' I said.

"'A young gentleman.'

"'And you and he probably became very good friends?'

"'Very good friends,' she said, drooping her eyes. 'But that does not hinder me from pitying you.'

"This was said with tender, deprecating, half-raised eyes. The waterfall seemed to gather itself out of the rocks and fling itself in my face. Pitying me! So she not only knew my secret, but she could speak to me of it. 'And by your leave, fair lady,' I thought, 'you might have waited until I mentioned it to you.' I felt scornful, wrathful, desperate.

"'Thank you,' I said, fiercely. And then I am afraid I commanded her to come home out of the wet. She looked pale and proud, and a little wistful, but she obeyed. As I handed her over a stile, I saw the tears big in her eyes. We walked home in silence. Now I reflect upon these things: the world is as black as a cave, but my rage is gone away. Had she been safe at Monasterlea, I had disappeared during the night-time, never to excite her pity any more. But I must stay by her till I bring her home, whence I brought her. And now I am going to wait until I hear more of this Christopher Lee. My love has cut down my pride, and I have forgiven her for her pity. I have swallowed the tender insult, and overlooked the gentle boldness.

"I will cling to her little hand till another comes to claim it. Then I shall go away."

CHAPTER XX. WORSE AND WORSE.

PAUL wrote later:—"I was reading to her aloud in a safe green refuge which we had sought out of the heat. I had chosen a volume of very sweet old-fashioned poetry, which treats of the passion of love, with more delicacy, and not less fervour, than some of our modern poets think well to use. We stopped to laugh at a squirrel, who had put his nose out of a tree; and she said, as if the squirrel had reminded her of something, or she had not been thinking of the squirrel after all:

"'I have heard that you are a poet. Will you show me some of your rhymes?'

"I did not stop to ask who had told her a thing so monstrous. Some verses I had just written lay in the book I held in my hand. I had not thought of showing them to her, nor anything of their kind. She would pity me again. Yet some wild whim seized me, and I put the paper in her hand.

"'There is a secret in this,' I said. 'If you find it, be tender with it.'

"She was taken by surprise, and the paper fluttered as she opened it. I stood a little aloof while she read my crazy lines. I don't know what I had hoped for as I watched her read. A blush, a confusion, a look of consciousness without displeasure. What right had I to look for these, after a former rebuff? Had I seen them I should have spoken, and learned the truth, and the whole truth; but nothing of the kind met my eyes. Her face got a little paler as she read, and there was a look of grief on it when she had done; her arm dropped down by her side, and she crushed the paper into the heart of her folded hand.

"'Such love ought to be returned,' she said, coldly. 'I am very sorry.' And we parted like two people made of ice. I hope I am sufficiently snubbed now; I shall return to Australia as soon as I have brought her safely to Monasterlea."

"She was right to think that he is a poet," said May. "At least, he can write love-songs."

She was talking to herself in a certain little inn chamber, her own for the time, where of late she had given herself up to many grave dreams and reveries. It was a chamber very fit for a young maid to dream in, with a passion-flower running all round the window; it looked out upon a waterfall descending with swift gleams of light into a melancholy tarn, and whose perpetual plash and drip made a restless murmur of music through the place night and day.

"If I were in his place I would scorn to write them to her!" May opened her shut hand and flung a little ball of crumpled paper fiercely to the other end of the room; and then followed a long silence in the chamber, except for the music that was coming in through the window. She was kneeling at the open sash, with her head crushed up for coolness against the broad, clustered leaves of the passion-flower; and the silence was to her a long fevered space of confused reflection, into which we have no more right to pry than into a private letter, of the contents of which even the owner has not yet possessed himself. The music from without was led by a haymaking woman down in the meadows below the inn, who, in a round, supple voice, was singing a winding Irish tune, ripe with melody. She had been singing it every day, and all day long, for a week, and each time she sang it, it had seemed to become sweeter and softer, growing familiar to May's listening ears. Now the words of Paul's song wandered down into the meadows there, from the corner where they had been so ignominiously flung, and set themselves to the tune as if by magic. They matched with the measure, and they wound themselves into the melody; and the waterfall made an accompaniment as it drummed, and crashed, and tinkled into the tarn.

At this time Aunt Martha had quite lost patience with the son of her adoption. Why should he look so gloomy? What cause had he for grief of any kind? Was not all the world shining on him? An inheritance in prospect—and—and—— Miss Martha could go no further. She was too loyal to her niece to declare even to her own thoughts that a young man here amongst them might have May for a wife. It was different from building castles while he was at the other side of the world; but it was not for this ending, she was forced to confess, that Aunt Martha had left her nest under the belfry of Monasterlea, and taken to gipsy ways at her stay-at-home time of life. She had hoped that in giving up her own comfort she was at least doing something towards uniting two young hearts. Now it seemed that she had been doing no such thing. After pondering over this matter very deeply, she shifted the blame from Paul, and persuaded herself that May must be in the wrong. Thinking over this, her anxiety got the better of her discretion.

"Aunt Martha," said May one evening in the twilight, when Paul was absent, and Miss Martha fidgety, but knitting in apparent peace, "I am terribly tired of this place. Let us go home!"

"Sit down here, child, and let me speak to you. You move about the room so, you make me dizzy. If I speak to you in one corner you are in another before I have done, and I can't tell where my answer is coming from. I want to ask you a question."

"Here I am then, Aunty; as steady as a rock!"

"You have seen more of Paul than I have done, lately. Do you think he has any intention of marrying and settling down in his own country? In his mother's place—I should like to see him settled; for many reasons."

May knew too well what was passing in her aunt's mind. The humiliating folly must be driven out wholly and without delay; even if Paul's secret must be dragged out for the purpose.

"I thing nothing is more unlikely," she said, with emphasis. "Indeed—it is not fair—we must not speak of it—but he has met with a disappointment which it seems he cannot get over. He will return to Australia before long."

May announced this from a vantage ground at the back of her aunt's chair. But she need not have been so cunning. Miss Martha's failing eyes were no way keen in the shifting dusk.

"A disappointment!" The old lady sat erect in her chair, and an afflicting idea went whirling through her head. "I hope—May!—you have not refused him?"

"No, no, no!" said May, breathlessly. Oh, Aunty! you make a very great mistake!"

"Do I?" said Miss Martha, meekly, in sad bewilderment at this proof of the perversity of the heart of man. "Have I really made such a mistake as that? And yet——"

But May was gone; and it was of no use to go on talking to the empty walls.

STRANGERS WITHIN OUR GATES.

Although the close of the war and the restoration of order on the cessation of the Communistic reign of terror has enabled a vast proportion of those who, in the time of trouble, found in this island a refuge and a sanctuary (a few of whom we took occasion to describe on their first arrival),* to return to their own land, many still remain among us. Some of them are yet proscribed by the law, some have lost families and friends, and even hope, and, not caring to disturb the embers of the past, are content to live on here, finding some small excitement in the study of fresh scenes and fresh people. So, left behind by the great wave of political revolution which cast them on our shore, they have remained among us, and have gradually settled down among their precursors, the men of '48, the followers of Barbes and Albert, of Ledru Rollin and of Louis Blanc; the singers of Freiligrath's songs or the mourners over Robert Blum's grave. Though there are hundreds of these men, with their families, who have been sojourners amongst us for more than twenty years, and who are, many of them, well known by sight to regular Londoners (surely everybody must know the tall, thin, elderly French gentleman, with the high hat and the short coat with the fur collar, who is apparently always in a hurry, but whose slip-shod feet prevent his making much way), they do not yet appear to be acclimatised, they do not speak our language, nor fall into our ways. They dwell apart in a little colony, which they have established for themselves, into which they welcome the newly-arrived exiles, whom we have just described. Other exiles there are who arrived a few weeks previously, but who would have received a very different kind of welcome from their compatriots: Imperialists these, servants of M. Rouher, hangers-on of M. Mocquard, varlets in the employ of M. Pietri, pique-assiettes at the Imperial lackeys' table; journalists and swash-bucklers, bullies and spies. Where are they, these dead leaves stripped from the great tree of Imperialism, which itself has since been snapped short by the fury of the blast? Are they in England at all, or, rather, have they not gone to America, waiting for the good time coming, when the golden bees shall once more flaunt on the Imperial purple, and the golden drones once more shall batten in luxury and riot? Certainly we shall not find them in the Leicester-square and Soho quarters, or amongst these strangers within our gates, whom we now purpose to visit.

So, for a beginning, let us plunge up a court at right angles with the north side of Leicester-square, and enter upon that labyrinthine mass of devious ways and crooked streets which forms a portion of Soho. Evidences of its foreign population meet you at once. The houses are common

* See All the Year Round, New Series, vol. v. p. 133.

and dingy, but many of the windows are set off with long muslin blinds, omnipresent in our neighbours' dwellings, never seen in our own; "chambres garnies a louer," and "moblierte zimmer zu vermiethen," are announcements constantly catching the eye; the illuminated lamp of the tavern at the corner of the street bears the words Dentscher Gasthof, and the sign of the dreary-looking house, which you would never take to be an hotel, were it not for the announcement, "table d'hôte à cinq heures," in its windows, is A la Boule d'Or. Here, with the front window of his shop taken out, and himself exposed to the gaze of the clustering children, who, however, are growing accustomed to him, is the vender of fried potatoes, which he shreds and cooks coram publico, and dispenses in pennyworths, done up in neat little paper cornets. Here are bakers' shops, filled with long, crisp, foreign rolls; coffee shops, over the blinds of which hang fiery little democratic broad-sheets in French, German, and Italian; restaurants of various kinds. Let us enter one of these and glance at the company assembled.

A well-looking and well-to-do restaurant this, as one may judge from its external appearance; the back of the fat bow window is covered by a red blind, through which the gaslight within gleams cheerily. Before the curtain stands in either corner a gigantic hock bottle, flanking a framed and printed extract from a daily newspaper recommendatory of the establishment. Pushing aside the swinging glass-door and entering the narrow little passage, we see at the far end the presiding genius of the establishment, bald, stout, middle-aged, standing in the glow of a brilliant, flameless, smokeless fire, which is reflected on every side from the bright copper stew-pans above and around him. After a distant glance at this maestro and his attendant imps, we open a door on the left, and find ourselves in the public room of the establishment; small tables are ranged here and there, table-clothed and set after the usual fashion, save that the napery is essentially foreign, as are the white china plates and dishes, the light glass, the good-looking unserviceable cutlery. In a corner facing us on the left hand sits the dame du comptoir, at a high raised desk, greeting our arrival, strangers though we be, with a gracious bow and a pleasant smile. To us hurries at once a quick, active waiter, French in his language, but German in his accent, bringing the menu of the day and asking our command. Look at the menu and mark the prices! A portion of soup, with the choice of three or four different kinds, for threepence; a similar variety in fish for sixpence—entrées such as you never see on a British bill of fare; croquettes, rognons à la vin de Sauterne, cotelettes à la soubise, for a shilling; a vegetable salad, unknown to British cookery, for sixpence; and an omelette, sweet or savoury, made with lightest hand and with best materials, for the same price. In short, we dine sumptuously with greater variety and infinitely more wholesomely than we could have done at any English eating-house for double the money, for three shillings, and drink with our dinner a bottle of St. Julien, which costs the same sum, and which is decidedly sounder, better, and more palatable wine than that for which our family wine merchants, Messrs. Binney, charge us two guineas a dozen.

And the company is pleasantly fresh and strange. At the table next to us sits a family party, consisting of papa and mamma and little girl; French, and well to do; papa forty, fat, not to say greasy, bald, with stray locks of hair brought up from the nape of his neck and from underneath his ear, and combed and flattened over the nude places on his skull. Papa is voluble, and has no hesitation in telling the waiter that this is a fête day with him, and that he is going in for what the Americans call a "big lick." Potage and poisson, entrées and hors d'œuvres, rôts, compotes, glaces, and fromage de Brie, all these enter into his category of delicacies to be devoured, while a bottle of champagne du pr-r-remier r-r-ang is ordered for his drink. Madame, tastefully attired in a tight-fitting silk dress, with simple linen collar and cuffs, but showing chignon enough for three, as she coolly takes off her bonnet and hangs it with her shawl above her head, smiles benignly as the order is given; and mademoiselle, who is eight years of age, stands on tip-toe to look in the glass to see if her two little gummy accroche-cœur curls are properly fixed on each cheek-bone, and forthwith commences an eye flirtation with the waiter.

Just beyond this happy family sits solitary a tall, thin, melancholy-looking man, whose worn frock-coat is buttoned to the throat, and whose thin, well-bred hands are set off by no scrap of wristband. An Italian this, a man of birth and breeding, a man of education, and accustomed to society twenty years ago, before the desolation of Novara and the defence of Rome.

He had a wife then and two children, but all three, tender plants as they were, collapsed under the effects of our brumous climate and our bitter spring winds, of the scanty living and the wretched lodging, of the want of means and the lack of courage, to bear them out in fighting the great battle of life. And so the Marchese—such is his rank in his native country—is left alone. He gains a livelihood, such as it is, by teaching music, by composing songs and dedicating them to the young ladies his pupils; by "making himself generally useful" at the evening parties, where his title and his button-hole ribbon, and his grand air, procure for him an invitation and a good supper. When he first came over here, he was proud, ambitious, touchy. None of these bad qualities any longer hinder his career; the man's heart is broken, that is all; he is really far more happy than he was. To-day is a jour maigre with him, as he is dependent on his own resources. He has dined for ninepence on soup and fish, and now lights up the blackened stump of an old cigar, which he takes from his breast-pocket preparatory to adjourning to another resort of his countrymen. Peace go with him!

The three young fellows at the next table are of a very different class; light-bearded, blue-eyed, curly-haired, dressed in parodies of English garments made by foreign tailors, with short little feet almost covered by their rounded trousers, and with heavy, family signet-rings on their forefingers. They are unmistakably German representatives of Rhenish wine-growers; perhaps, erst old comrades in Mainz or Frankfurt, accidentally met together in London, and cracking a bottle in remembrance of Deutschland, and in honour of Bruderschaft. These gentry are both thrifty and well paid, and there is no occasion for them, at a meeting like this, to spare their prices. So the dinner is excellent, the wine—the landlord knows his customers, and, indeed, is a customer of theirs—of the very best, and the conversation, in a singular mélange of English and German, rattles unceasingly. There are several other guests in the room; two or three English, who look up with a half-amazed, half-amused air; two or three splenetic Frenchmen, who twirl their moustaches angrily as the hated German language breaks into their ears, and seem inclined to take notice of the intolerant assumption of the Teutonic commis voyageurs. But M. Wetter, the host (though a Belgian, he has a very German sounding name), has been too long in England to permit any disturbance to take place in his house; a word and a smile from madame put the discomfited Frenchmen at their ease; a joke from their countryman, the head-waiter, causes the Germans to modify their mirth, and by the time M. Wetter, clothed and in his right mind, has left his stew-pans and appeared amongst them, they are ready to mix business with pleasure by naming new beverages, and suggesting fresh orders, over the coffee just brought into them. It is time for our coffee too; but we will take it not here, but at Tutti's.

Twenty years ago, when the Suspension Bridge, which now spans the Avon at Clifton, spanned the Thames at Hungerford, a portion of the plot of ground now occupied by the magnificent shed, passages, approaches, and hotel of the Charing Cross Railway, was covered by a very mangy block of buildings known as Hungerford Market. A tenth-rate Billingsgate, a fiftieth-rate Covent Garden, a wretchedly bad market in every possible way; in its situation and shape, in the manner of its tradespeople, and in the quality of their wares, in the style of its customers, their tastes and their looks; was Hungerford. It pretended to sell fresh fish, and you could nose them in the lobby of the Adelphi Theatre; it pretended to sell fresh vegetables, but, like certain eccentric modern artists, all its greens were browns; its potatoes were flaccid and watery; and its peas were of the colour of those immortal vegetables which, according to the undying joke, ought to have been sent to Knightsbridge. Hungerford, too, attempted a poor and colourless imitation of Leadenhall, by offering for sale poultry much too large for the coops in which they were confined, toy terriers, rabbits, guinea-pigs, and such small deer, uncomfortable in appearance and unpleasant in odour. Many of the shops in the long, dismal, dank arcades were untenanted, abortive attempts to obtain a livelihood in them being constantly made, and as constantly failing. The voyagers then by the penny steam-boats, who took the arcade on their way from the pier to the Strand, scarcely exhibited any surprise when they saw one of these doleful tenements undergoing regeneration at the builder's hands. But as day by day revealed to them the progress of an erection of quite an unaccustomed character, as they saw the ground

floor transformed into a shop, fitted with a counter indeed, but with a large, open, unglazed space where the window ought to be, and furnished inside with little round marble tables and foreign chairs—when they marked the sign-board, on which was painted a wine-glass piled high above the brim with some composition, partly red, partly white—when, finally, the promoters of the establishment announced themselves in long, thin, foreign-looking letters as Tutti and Frutti, from Bologna, manufacturers of penny ices, the British public wondered indeed! Penny ices? Nonsense! Ices were a magnificent luxury for the delectation of the wealthy alone, costing sometimes a shilling, and never less than sixpence! The Hungerford Market frequenting public had stared with curious and longing eyes at countesses eating ices, as they reclined in their carriages opposite Mr. Gunter's or Mr. Grange's shop, and now these delicacies were about to be offered for a penny. It was absurd! Nevertheless, the day of opening came, and those hardy spirits, who had the courage to enter the premises, found themselves received by black-bearded, black-eyed foreigners, unintelligible in speech, but courteous in manner, who ladled out glass after glass, piled up after the manner of the picture on the sign-board, with marvellous rapidity. Perhaps to their great astonishment, the consumers found that there was no doubt about its being ice. The first mouthful settled that! It was very cold, and very succulent, and very nice, and it only cost a penny! Messrs. Tutti and Frutti sprang into great and sudden popularity; their ice-shop was a success. After sweltering in a crowded steam-boat, under a July sun, it was pleasant to cool oneself with a glace à la Vanille (the foreign language giving it quite an additional flavour) in the shady arcades of Hungerford. It sounded rather well for the gentlemen members of a party proceeding per Citizen steamer up the river, to invite the lady members to take "a hice" before they embarked. Some of the dashing young bloods of the day (young bloods, be it understood, in a very minor degree) began to speak of the shop as a "caffy," and found that to sit at the marble-topped tables with their hats on one side, and the fringed ends of their Joinville ties well pulled out, was almost as good as going to "Bolong." So that soon the establishment at Hungerford was found to be insufficient for the business, and Tutti and Frutti opened a shop in Holborn, that other great artery of London traffic. When the short-lived English summer was over, and the ice business was of course at an end, they took to selling chocolate, in which, both liquid and solid, they did a very good business.

So the whirligig of time went on and brought with it various changes. What became of Frutti, whether he died or whether he retired to his native country, with the fortune he had made out of English pennies, is not known. Another Tutti, a relative of the original, appeared upon the scene, and erected a large music-hall very near the spot upon which the old ice-shop stood, while the original Tutti embarked his savings in the establishment of what is still the largest café restaurant in England. The premises in which he started had been well known to the public, in two or three other forms, for many years. First in our memory as a hall of science, where Perkins's steam-gun poured forth its shower of bullets against the iron target, and where the electrical eel distributed convulsive shocks to those who were weak-minded enough to touch it. Then the building experienced another phase, and became a casino, "an establishment," to quote its description from an excellent farce by Mr. Shirley Brooks, "promoted by the Early Closing Association for the moral improvement of young Holborn," a dancing-hall, where was to be found the best ball band in London, with Henri Laurent for its conductor, and Arban for its cornet. These were the days of the Olga, and the Bridal, and the Valse d'Amour, of the Jupiter and Annen, and the Firefly polkas, of the Post-Horn and Sturm-Marsch galops. Do people dance now? Perhaps they do. The subject has ceased to be of the smallest interest to the present writer.

After a little time the band and its frequenters moved to more spacious quarters, and the gallery became empty and deserted. From time to time attempts were made to galvanise it into life again. Was it there that we found ourselves one of five, the rest of the audience being composed of three old women and a child in a tartan dress, looking on at Pokey's Paris, and trying hard to believe we were in a balloon overhanging that capital? Was it there that we witnessed "a bottle of champagne uncorked by Horace Plastic," which probably shared the fate of other bottles of champagne, and was drunk out at once? Was it there that we underwent that driest

and most awful ordeal of all, when we looked on while a Scotch gentleman spread out before a very select audience the contents of the Gaberlunzie Wallet—a collection of Northern "wut" and wisdom most superlatively dreary? Then came an entirely dead period, during which Tutti saw his opportunity, and transformed the gallery into what it now is.

Entering through the swinging glass-doors, we will take the staircase immediately on our left and descend into the lower regions. A long and narrow hall, spacious enough to contain fifteen billiard-tables, three being set aside for pool, and all being generally engaged throughout the evening. The floor above is a very grand hall, lofty, spacious, and handsome, plentifully decorated with looking-glass, and fitted from end to end with a row of divans and of marble-topped tables on either side, and with a double row of both down the middle. While nearly all these seats and tables are filled by a tacit though thoroughly well-understood agreement amongst the frequenters of the room, different portions of it are set aside for different purposes. Thus, while the tables on the right-hand side are occupied by the chess-players, who are gathered together in force (Tutti's being the acknowledged head-quarters of the game, and frequented by its most skilful exponents and their admiring friends), the tables on the left-hand side are generally patronised by such visitors as may have dropped in for the purpose of conversation, or by those who have ladies with them. And when we say ladies we use the word in its integrity. A glance round Tutti's would convince any one in a moment that it was not at all the place where Madame Lais or Fraulein Phryne would be amused or even at her ease. During the daytime Tutti's is generally patronised by ladies, and after the morning performances of pantomimes it is, we understand, a sight to see the mothers and the children regaling themselves on chocolate and bread-and-butter, preparatory to departure homeward by suburban trains. At night, lady visitors are much fewer in number, but of the same thoroughly respectable class, and then, as we have observed, they generally sit on the left-hand side of the room. Another thing to be noticed is, that while the chess-tables and draught-boards are principally occupied by solid Britishers, or more solid Germans, silent mostly, bending over their game and emitting every now and then thick puffs of smoke, a grunt of perplexity, or a deep short laugh of triumph, two or three of the large tables in the middle of the upper end of the room are given up to noisy, vivacious, gesticulating Frenchmen, the clatter of whose tongues is as loud as the rattle of the dominoes with which they are playing. During the Franco-Prussian war, the tide of discussion used to run tolerably high between the representatives of the two nationalities, and even now they keep apart and there is no fusion between them.

Tutti's has its celebrities, and some of them are here to-night. That handsome old man with high forehead, aquiline nose, white hair, and soft white beard is Herr Steinmetz, at one time the finest chess-player in Europe. The matches that he has won against fearful odds; how he has held his own against several players at the same time; the games which he has played with bandaged eyes, or with his face turned to the wall, are they not written in the chronicles of the sporting press and in the hearts of his admirers? He is an old man now, and does not play nearly so much as formerly, contenting himself with looking on at the prowess of his successors, and occasionally giving advice, which is always followed. Yon black-bearded, bright-eyed, olive-skinned little man with the close-cropped head, who is expelling smoke from his mouth, his nostrils, and apparently his ears, as he rattles the dominoes with quick, lithe movements, is Etienne Didot, Parisian journalist, and hero of the Commune, who boasts of having recommended that not merely the hostages, but that everybody else should be shot, but who was glad enough at the restoration of order to lie hidden in a picture-dealer's garret, and to make his escape to England disguised as a peasant. And here, bending over the most doughtily contested chess match, is a somewhat worn, shrewd face, which comes upon you in connexion with other associations, with the Park and the Row, with the Bellona Club and Skindle's, with a life as different as may be from that passed at Tutti's. The shrewd-looking man is Stewart of Pitcairn, whose knowledge of the world is varied and extensive: at Eton, in a cavalry regiment, as a Highland laird, as a wanderer throughout the old world and the new world; who has been soldier, traveller, sportsman, and landed proprietor; petted by women, liked by men, reverenced by his clan, and who in the autumn of his life finds the greatest amusement in smoking his meerschaum pipe and playing chess, or watching chess played, at Tutti's; not that he has less money or less position, only he

has seen enough of the world, too much his friends say, and has found that simple amusements are the most lasting.

On an average Tutti's has three thousand visitors a day, the majority English, but with a large sprinkling of foreigners from all parts of the Continent. Coffee, chocolate, and aërated waters are the liquors consumed, while for edibles there are delicious bread-and-butter, wonderful omelettes, and all the simpler kinds of food. The entire establishment is conducted with liberality and decorum, and is, as it most fully deserves to be, perfectly successful.

THE BURN AMONG THE HEATHER.

OBAN, ARGYLLSHIRE, 1871.

NURSED on the bosom of the Ben,
I track thee downwards to the glen,
With all thy devious twists and turns
Through moor and moss, mid bent and ferns;
And careless as the wilful wind,
What joys we seek and fail to find,
We'll pass this summer day together,
Thou bonnie burn among the heather.

An idle robin wandering by,
Thinks he may bathe as well as I,
But doubtful of the traitor, man,
Flies out of danger while he can;
A mountain lamb, that longs to drink,
Starts to espy me from the brink,
And scuds affrighted down the wind,
Scared at the sight of human kind.

It pains me, fellows of the dust!
To know your terror and mistrust,
And that you fail to understand
There lurks no murder in my hand;
That I'm unwilling to destroy
The humblest innocence and joy,
And that your dread of me and mine,
Jars upon harmonies divine.

I rise refreshed, to trace once more
Thy wanton waters to the shore,
And never weary as I go;
Blue sky above, green earth below;
To render into words the song,
Now soft and sweet, now loud and strong,
That to the sunlight and the moon,
Thou singest to such constant tune.

I know the old familiar strain!
I've sung it and will sing again,
The song of Gratitude and Love,
Such as the skylark trills above;
The lilt of Hope, and Joy, and Peace,
The Hymn of Praise that shall not cease,
While Love and Reason dwell together,
Thou bonnie burn among the heather!

CHRONICLES OF LONDON STREETS.

CLARE MARKET.

IN Clare House-court, a not very inviting passage on the left hand as you go up Drury-lane, stood, during the Civil Wars, the town house of the Earls of Clare. John Holles, the second earl, during the troubles of Charles's time, listened from his windows to the threatening hum of the noisy mob which shouted rejoicings at Cromwell's victories, and wondered what good or evil would result therefrom to the title he bore. "There is," says Howell, writing in 1657, "towards Drury-lane, a new market called Clare Market; there is there a street and palace of the same name, built by the Earl of Clare, who lives there in a princely manner, having a house, a street, and a market both for flesh and fish, all bearing his name." London at those times was full of such picturesque contrasts, for gentlemen of position dwelt in places like Shire-lane (Temple Bar), or the slums of Whitefriars, maintaining, as best they might, a solitary dignity amidst low taverns, the haunts of tipsy soldiers, and the dens of thieves, bullies, and assassins. Day by day their gilt coaches must have rolled forth from their court-yards, giving the idlers and scamps of the localities in which they lingered tempting glimpses of rich furniture, costly plate, and fine clothes.

In 1720, Strype describes Clare Market as "very considerable, and well served with provisions, both flesh and fish, for, besides the butchers in the shambles, it is much resorted to by the country butchers and higglers. The market-days are Wednesdays and Saturdays. The toll belongs to the Duke of Newcastle (Pelham Holles), as ground landlord thereof." The son of the second earl (probably the donor of the blackamoor holding a dial in the garden of Clement's Inn) died in 1689; his son, created Marquis of Clare and Duke of Newcastle, died in 1711, when all his honours perished in the grave with him. Careless of earl or marquis, the street venders still, however, continue the market traffic, won for them from the City by the first earl, and hoarsely bawling their wares, their rough faces gleaming out through fiery gusts of gas, or showing pale by dim flickers of paper lamps, contrive to carry on a busy though humble traffic, as briskly as when Hogarth used to wander here on his way to his adjacent club, or when Colley Cibber, in a richly laced coat, sought the nearest way to the Spiller's Head.

This Spiller was a celebrated actor of Queen Anne's reign, and his greatest character was Mat o' the Mint, in the Beggars' Opera. The butchers, whose red faces and blue frocks were always conspicuous in the gallery of the Portugal-street Theatre, adored Spiller, and induced an equally enthusiastic publican of the neighbourhood to take down his sign of the Bull and Butcher, and put up the Spiller's Head in its place. When Spiller died in 1729,

some wag of the day, writing under the pseudonym of a Clare Market butcher, produced the following elegy on the dead actor, and in its day it passed for a very pretty passage of wit:

> Down with your marrow-bones and cleavers all,
> And on your marrow-bones ye butchers fall,
> For prayers from you, who never prayed before,
> Perhaps poor Jemmy may to life restore.

The Spiller's Head became a great resort of artists and actors, and Tom D'Urfey, who used to sing duets with Charles the Second, and long after him Colley Cibber, Pope's troublesome antagonist, were in turn presidents. At the Bull's Head in Clare Market, the Shepherd and his Flock Club met, and also an Artists' Club, of which Hogarth was a member. It was at this club that Doctor Radcliffe, the great physician, was enjoying himself, when the damping news came that he had dropped some five thousand pounds in the South Sea Bubble.

"Never mind," said the philosophic doctor, "'tis but going up five thousand more pairs of stairs."

This latter club, a local antiquary, to whom we are largely indebted, says was first instituted by the actors of the Lincoln's-inn-fields Theatre.

Of Rich, the manager and famous harlequin, a story is told, which is probably the original of several almost similar ones, with the advantage of being true. One night, returning from the Portugal-street Theatre in a hackney-coach, he ordered the man to drive him to the Sun Tavern, Clare Market. Passing one of the parlour windows that was invitingly open, Rich sprang out of the coach into the room. The coachman just then halting, and finding the vehicle empty, slammed the steps, cursed the cheat who had bilked him, and mounted his box to drive off. At this moment Rich jumped back, and putting out his head told the man to turn the coach and set him down. After he got out, Rich swore at the stupid fellow, and offered him his fare. Jarvey declined; he did not like the look of things, and said stoutly his master had ordered him not to take any money at all that night. Rich replied, "Your master is a fool, here is a shilling for yourself." But the man was resolute, regained his box, and as he drove off shouted, "No, no, Mr. Devil, I know you in spite of your shoes, and so you're made a fool of for once." This story is usually told of an actor who, on being set down at his destination in the dark, kept getting out at one door of the vehicle and going in at the other, till the coachman, astonished at such an endless procession, fled for terror.

Mr. Diprose, who has all his life been collecting the memorabilia of the odd nooks of St. Clement's parish, has a curious account of some old pictures that were long in the possession of Mr. Smith, of the Hope Tavern, Blackmoor-street, Clare Market. They were always said to be the original portraits of Jack Sheppard and his mother, painted by Hogarth's father-in-law, Sir James Thornhill, and the story went, in 1845, that they had been sold to Mr. Merivale of Gray's Inn for ninety-seven guineas. Below the moulding of the frame of Mrs. Sheppard's portrait were found seven guineas and several copper coins, between the moulding and lining of the other were several curious papers and documents relating to the rebellion of 1745, all bearing the post-mark of the time, and probably secreted there by some wary Jacobite in a moment of peril. There were also discovered a cheque for seventeen pounds and a note for ten pounds. Among the papers was a printed notice for turning the Lincoln's-inn-fields Theatre into a guard-house, and suspending a certain performance.

Now Jack being a favourite in Clare Market, it was not unnatural that the Black Jack Tavern, at the corner of Portsmouth-street, which had been the favourite haunt of taciturn Joe Miller, should be a place he frequented, and from the first-floor window there he once leaped to avoid a sudden rush of Jonathan Wild's myrmidons.

The Jump, as the tavern was afterwards called, was, and we believe still is, a great resort of medical students. The Jump was also the place where the "Pop-gun" plot of 1794 was supposed to have been concocted. At the time of the Horne Tooke and Thelwall trials, two men, named Higgins and Smith, and a third, named Lemaitre, were arrested on a charge of plotting to kill the king with a poisoned arrow. Lemaitre, a watch-case maker, only eighteen, was for three days closely examined by the Privy Council, then confined for thirty-two weeks in Coldbath Fields, and finally discharged. During this time his mother had died of grief. Some months after he was again arrested, tried, and acquitted. Mr. Warburton and Lord Dacre kept the poor fellow's case for years before parliament, but failed to obtain for him any redress.

Clare Market seems always to have been much frequented by actors in search of

traits of low humour, and of them many traditions still exist. That idol of her day, Mrs. Bracegirdle, used frequently to visit the stalls in Clare Market, and give money to the poor unemployed basket-women whom she found moping in corners hungry and disconsolate. She became so well known to them at last, that she could not pass that way to the theatre without being loudly greeted by their thanks and benedictions.

Bannister once met with a young and gay spendthrift, who was lamenting his folly in having run through the handsome fortune left him by his father, a tripe-seller in Clare Market.

"Cheer up, man," said Charles. "How did you lose it?"

"I got rid of it by horse-racing," groaned the sufferer.

"Never mind," was the reply; "you only lost by your gallopers what your father gained by his trotters."

This reminds us of Douglas Jerrold's remark to another lamenting prodigal, who was regretting his pair of exquisite bays: "Well, my boy, but only think of your duns!"

Our local antiquary reminds us of two celebrated Clare Market worthies: Pett, the miser, and Brutus Billy, the crossing-sweeper in Fleet-street. Pett was a Warwickshire man, who came to London at ten years of age, with only a shilling in his pocket. An old woman who sold pies helped him till he could earn a living. Apprenticed to a butcher in Southwark, in due time he became a journeyman in Clare Market. For the first few years he was paid twenty-five pounds a year, with meat and drink. Early thrift had turned him to flint; to get money and save it became the ruling passion of his life. One night, when very thirsty after work, he rashly swore, says Mr. Diprose (into whose records we again dip), to treat himself to a pint of porter every Saturday, as soon as he had saved a thousand pounds. He achieved this weekly feast after tremendous mortifications. Winter after winter he never lit a fire or went to bed by candle-light. For forty-two years he slew and dissected oxen, and for thirty years occupied the same miserable room. He never treated man, woman, or child to a glass, never lent or borrowed a penny, never spoke ill or well of any one, and never ate a morsel at his own expense. The glorious result of this agreeable life was that our prudent journeyman butcher died in June, 1803, leaving two thousand four hundred and seventy-five pounds in the Three per Cents to distant relations, not one of whom he had ever seen. About half an hour before he died, he was seen trying to bargain for a cheap coffin.

Brutus Billy was of quite another species, and under his black skin flowed the richest and warmest life-blood. He was an old Jamaica negro, who for years swept the crossing at the Fleet-street corner of Ludgate-hill, opposite the shop of Alderman Waithman. Brutus was short and thick-set, jet black, and with very silvery hair, trained into a fashionable toupee over his forehead. His industry and civility won him friends, and Mr. Waithman frequently gave him money, and at last provided him with a regular Sunday dinner. Brutus Billy lived in White Horse-yard, Stanhope-street, Drury-lane, and was universally respected, the more so, that he was known to have money in the Funds; report, always magnifying, said thousands upon thousands. Tim-buc-too, as he was sometimes irreverently called, when he had shut up shop—that is, swept mud over the crossing, the goodwill of which he eventually sold for a large sum—used to carry nuts and fruit round to places of entertainment. By such diligent and frugal ways, Brutus (perhaps introduced into Moncrieff's Tom and Jerry, as the original type of the black man who is disgusted to see "turkey without sassengers" at the beggars' supper) made a fortune. Brutus Billy died in Chapel-court in 1854, aged eighty-seven, and tradition says he left seven thousand pounds to his kind benefactress, Miss Waithman. A slight per centage may perhaps be taken from this amount, but there is no doubt of his having really left that lady a legacy.

Among other legends of Clare Market, collected by the local antiquary, we may mention one of a Mohock Club, held at a tavern close to the Tennis Court playhouse. The wild members were chiefly lawyers' clerks from Chancery-lane and Lincoln's-inn-fields. The first who entered the club was chairman for the evening, and he had the right to nominate two or three couples of mad fellows, who, between ten and eleven, were sent forth to torment inoffensive people. Their plan was to lie in ambush till they heard a solitary man coming. They would then raise a shout of "That's he! that's he! that's he!" and drawing their swords give chase. If they caught the poor wretch, and he was not too brave or stubborn, they surrounded him in a circle

and pricked him with their swords. After three or four such chases they returned to the club and entertained their amiable friends with exaggerated narratives of their adventures. The knocking down the old watchmen in the Regent's time seems quite a playful amusement after such ferocity.

In a chapel at the corner of Lincoln's-inn-fields, that harlequin preacher and clever quack of Pope's time, Orator Henley, set up his "gilt tub." Before this he had wooed for three years the butchers of Newport Market. Pope talks of Henley's butchers, and in the Dunciad feathers him with his poisoned arrows, every one sent full and straight at the noisy impostor.

> Still break the benches, Henley, with thy strain,
> While Sherlock, Hare, and Gibson preach in vain;
> O worthy thou of Egypt's wise abodes,
> A decent priest where monkeys were the gods;
> But fate with butchers placed thy priestly stall,
> Meek modern faith to murder, hack, and maul.

Hogarth, or one of his imitators, had his gird at Henley, introducing his sly leering face at a christening; and in another place showing him mounted on a scaffold, with a monkey by his side, perhaps in allusion to Pope's lines.

Orator Henley was the son of a Leicestershire vicar, and had been well educated. On leaving Cambridge he returned home, opened a school, wrote a poem called Esther, and began a Universal Grammar in ten languages, before he yet knew his own. Driven from the country by some scandal, he hurried to London, and for a short time did duty in a chapel in Bedford-row. Under the Earl of Macclesfield's patronage he translated Pliny's Epistles and several French works. Still restless and ambitious, Henley competed for a lectureship in Bloomsbury, but the parishioners complained that he threw himself about too much in the pulpit. This drove the orator almost out of his senses, for "regular action" was what he considered the first requisite for a great preacher.

"Blockheads," he shouted to the astonished vestrymen, "are *you* qualified to judge of the degree of action necessary for a preacher of God's Word? Were you able to read, or had got sufficient sense, you sorry knaves, to understand the renowned orator of antiquity, he would tell you almost the only requisite of a public speaker was action, action, ACTION. But I despise and defy you, provoco ad populum; the public shall decide between us."

So saying he cast the dust off his feet against the men of Bloomsbury, and rushed eastward to establish a religion of his own. The learned Whiston trying to dissuade Henley from leaving the Church of England, Henley warned him not to enter his room in Newport Market at his peril. The orator preached his absurd sermons on Sundays, and lectured on general subjects on Wednesdays and Fridays. He also wrote pamphlets, satirised all public persons, and issued a weekly periodical called the Hyp-Doctor, for which Sir Robert Walpole, never very scrupulous about the means he used, is said to have subsidised him. The subjects of this half-madman's sermons were eccentric enough. Among others, we find discourses on Lot's Wife, What Language Our Saviour will use on the Last Day, the Tears of Magdalen, St. Paul's Cloak, and the Last Wills of the Patriarchs. He is described as leaping into the pulpit through a sort of spring door, and falling to work with hands, arms, legs, and head, all at once. The attack on the Essay of Man he answered by a lecture on Whether Mr. Pope be a Man of Sense in one Argument—Whatever is, is Right. On one occasion he filled his room with ladies by advertising an Oration on Marriage. He began by shaking his head impudently at the fair audience, and telling them he was afraid they oftener came to church to get husbands than to hear the preacher. Another time he drew together a crowd of shoemakers by announcing that he could teach a method of making shoes with extraordinary facility. The secret consisted, however, merely in cutting the tops off old boots. His impudence, indeed, was boundless, and the butchers carried him through many scrapes, hustling away and threatening aggressive intruders. Once the government stretched out a claw towards him, and he was, in 1745, cited before the Privy Council for ridiculing Herring, the Archbishop of York, who had armed his clergy to face the Pretender. Henley, vigorous, cool, with strong voice and strange gestures, baffled the lords, saying he thought there was no harm in cracking a joke on a red herring. "My lords, I must live."

"I don't see the necessity," replied the Earl of Chesterfield.

"That is a good thing," said Henley, "but it has been said before," and this quelled the rising laugh. The man had some wit, for when accused of doing all for lucre, he replied sharply, "Well, some do nothing for it." During one sermon he publicly rebuked a Bloomsbury vestry-

man, whom he spied out among the audience: "You see, sir," he roared, "there are a few sensible persons in the world who consider me as not totally unqualified for the office I have undertaken." Henley, however, sometimes met his match, for once challenging two Oxford men, they came with such a strong escort of cudgels, that the butchers shunned the contest, and Henley stole away through the theatrical spring door. The orator used to boast that no one dared answer his challenges, that he could study twelve hours a day, and write three dissertations a week, without help.

In spite of his talent, and satire, and the patronage of the butchers, Orator Henley gradually grew coarse and drunken, and died in obscurity in 1756, aged sixty-four. It is reported that he died mad. He left behind him six hundred manuscripts, which he valued at a guinea apiece, and one hundred and fifty volumes of notes. The whole were sold for less than one hundred pounds. The orator has gone, but the butchers still flourish. As Henley once said, "One must live;" and people, though they can perhaps do without oratory, heresy, or satire, still require their chop and steak.

HOW WE MAKE THIEVES.

Two ladies—an old and a young one—walking at their ease along a certain fashionable thoroughfare in the extreme west of the great metropolis, find themselves suddenly in the midst of a small gang of urchins, varying between the ages of six and twelve years, and characterised by an almost inconceivable raggedness and squalor of "get up." Perhaps among them—they number some half-dozen — they may boast five shoes, a cap and a half, and various detached portions of other articles of wearing apparel, no complete garment, however, being found in possession of any one of them. The professional engagements of these youths are various. One or two of them appear to have embarked their capital in the match or cigar-light trade; one is a purveyor of literary food, and has a bundle of Echoes under his arm; another carries a fragment of a broom, with which he makes a great show of sweeping the path in front of any special wayfarer whom he happens to have selected as the recipient of his attentions. One or two have no stock-in-trade at all, trusting to open and undisguised begging as a means of extracting halfpence from the lieges.

Our two ladies are not long in being besieged. The venders of cigar-lights and the purveyors of Echoes indeed allow them to pass undisturbed, but the others—the proprietor of the fragmentary broom especially—are clamorous and pressing in their attentions. Likely victims, no doubt, both these ladies, as far as appearances go. The elder of the two, a comfortable-looking personage, about sixty-five years old, has a kind and sensible face, with something of a nervous, anxious look about it, which forbids the notion of a phlegmatic or crabbed nature. The younger looks pretty and good-natured, and is quite unable to repress a smile as the small urchin already alluded to runs in front of her and her companion, sweeping vigorously right and left, as he scuttles along, without being at all influenced by the fact that there is nothing whatever to sweep.

"I really must give him something," says the younger lady.

Her companion shook her head. "It sounds uncharitable and hard, I know," she said, "but I do most earnestly beg that you won't."

"It seems so unkind," urged the other; "look at his little bare feet on the ground."

"What you give him—for I see there's no hindering you—will not keep his feet from the ground, my dear, of that you may be very sure. Indeed, those bare feet are, I suspect, a part of his stock-in-trade."

"I can't help it—and then he looks so delightfully impudent. Just this once, I must."

"Well, just this once, I suppose you must, especially as he has heard every word we are saying, and sees you getting out your purse; but when we get home I'll tell you a story of something that happened to myself, which will enable you to understand how it happens that I am so hard-hearted, as I am sure you believe me to be."

"Time was, my dear," the old lady went on, when she and her companion were afterwards seated at work in a comfortable drawing-room at Kensington—"time was, and that not so very long ago, when I used to talk and feel very much as you do, thinking it harsh and unfeeling to turn a deaf ear to such an appeal as that which we have just heard, and to which you have, in spite of my entreaties, responded; but not very long ago something happened which I will tell you about, and

which materially affected my views as to questions of this sort, and, indeed, as to matters of sentiment generally.

"Some years ago—fifteen or eighteen, I should say, at least—I was living—an old maid then, as I am now—in the immediate neighbourhood of Sloane-street. I was very much then what I am now. I was fond of the society of my friends, fond of having things comfortable and neat about me, particular about my tea, much more sentimental than I am now, rather addicted to routine, but very fairly happy, as I believe a prodigious number of old maids—when once they have made up their minds to accept the situation—are. I have said that I was living in the neighbourhood of Sloane-street, and I confess I do not see why I should not state at once that the exact locality in which I had taken up my abode was that queer, old-fashioned, inconsistent, half-secluded, half-frequented bit of the world which goes by the name of Hans-place. Not far from this particular thoroughfare, there was a certain corner which I passed at least twice every day of my life, and sometimes much oftener, and here, my dear, there used generally to be assembled a little group of street urchins, very much like those from whom we have just escaped, and who, like them, depended for a living on what is generally called popular benevolence. There were no Echoes to sell in those days, but there were matches and cigar-lights, and there were sometimes horses to be held—much oftener for some reason than seems to be the case now—and then there were omnibuses travelling up and down Sloane-street, alongside of which it was quite competent for these little creatures to run, turning somersaults, and converting themselves temporarily into catharine-wheels, with a view of inducing those who were riding outside to fling any loose coppers they might have to spare into the road; besides which, it was always possible to get hold of the stump of a broom, and pretend to sweep a crossing, like your little friend just now.

"Well, my dear, there was one special little ragamuffin belonging to this gang of which I have been speaking, of whom, whenever I went out, I used almost invariably to take some sort of notice. He was a pretty little rascal, neatly and well made, uncommonly nimble and active, with bright mischievous blue eyes, and a face which we instinctively set down as belonging to the Irish type. In addition to all which he was, as you said just now, 'most delightfully impudent.' But the most remarkable thing about this small protégé of mine was decidedly his hair. It was in a tangled mass all over his head, and not very familiar with comb or brush, but it was of a colour so exceedingly rich and uncommon that it was impossible not to be struck by its beauty. The artists who were in the habit of coming to see me always used to rave about the child's hair, saying that it was of that particular hue which is a modification of red without being actually red, and which Titian and Giorgione loved to paint. I must confess that I believe that this Giorgione tint had a great deal to do with my patronage of the little rascal, and not only with mine, but with that of a great many ladies, old and young both, who lived about the neighbourhood.

"All the time that I lived in Hans-place, I used to pass this small urchin's crossing two or three times a day, and generally, I think, gave him something—any halfpence I might have got in change from the tradespeople—or sometimes even a threepenny-bit or a sixpence. Not unfrequently, too, I would direct the servants to give him some broken victuals on the door-step, and he was even, on one or two occasions, admitted inside the house to partake of a good meal; but that was when I was making a picture of the Infant St. John the Baptist, for which I made him sit to me, but which, somehow or other, I never could finish quite to my satisfaction.

"It was no doubt a bad thing for 'little Mike'—that was the name he went by—when the time came for my breaking up my abode in Hans-place. The move made a great change in all my arrangements, and one difference which it caused was that I rarely set eyes on my young St. John the Baptist. At last I went abroad for a considerable time, and when I came back to London, after being away the best part of two years, I found that he had disappeared altogether, and that nobody could tell me anything about him.

"You must suppose now, my dear, that a considerable time—some years, in fact—went by. Of course it was not likely that such a lapse of time could take place without bringing about all sorts of changes, both in the small events of my somewhat monotonous life, and in the opinions and feelings to which these events gave birth. With regard to the first—the circumstances of my life during this interval—I need not trouble you, more especially as they are in

the main known to you already; while as to the last—the changes of opinion which those circumstances brought about—I need only mention one: a strong conviction, namely, of the enormous importance of training in very early life, and of the organisation of some system for the rescuing of young children from the bad influences to which, when left to go adrift in the London streets, they must necessarily be exposed. This impression was one which every day's experience served to confirm and strengthen; and a certain incident, the telling of which will bring this narration to a conclusion, was all that was wanting to convert strong impressions into absolute conviction.

"One day, my dear, something less than a year ago, it was on the occasion of the queen's opening the Royal Albert Hall—I left my sister's home at Brompton about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, intending to take my accustomed stroll in Kensington Gardens. I was not alone, for my sailor nephew, Sam, who happened to be in town for a short time, on leave from his ship at Devonport, had come out with me to smoke his cigar, intending to give me the advantage of his escort as far as the gates of the gardens. Our line of route from Brompton lay along one of those great new thoroughfares which lie on each side of the Horticultural Gardens, and it very soon brought us into the midst of the crowd which had assembled in the neighbourhood of the Albert Hall, with a view of seeing all that might be seen of the day's pageant from the road outside the amphitheatre.

"I have a great dread of a crowd, and as soon as I saw we were becoming involved in one, was for turning back, but my nephew would not hear of it, and pledged himself to bring me through it safely, and so he did, as far as my personal security was concerned.

"Well, my dear, we had not been long fighting our way through the mob—for it was nothing less—when, just as all eyes were directed to the Queen's carriage, which was passing at the moment, I felt a distinct tug at my watch-chain, and looking round saw a very ill-looking fellow, who had been standing close beside me, making off with my watch in his hand. The involuntary exclamation which burst from me attracted my nephew's attention, and he, catching sight of the thief almost at the same moment that I did, dashed off after him, and had collared him, and handed him over to one of the numerous policemen who stood about, in less time than it takes me to relate what happened.

"I need not tell you, who know me so well, how much I was disturbed and agitated by this unpleasant affair. I was not used to adventures, and this one might have upset anybody much more accustomed to stirring incidents than I was. I was horribly upset, and should have given in altogether but for my nephew, who, however, could not stay with me. All he could do was to see me safely out of the crowd, after which he went off to attend to the entering of the charge at the police station. When he came back I found, to my horror, that it would be necessary for me, as well as my nephew, to appear at the magistrate's court next day to give my evidence.

"Now, if there is one thing that I dread more than another in this world, it is coming forward in public and making myself conspicuous in any way whatsoever. That night I did not sleep a single wink for thinking what was in store for me, and when I came down in the morning I had almost made up my mind that I would let the whole thing pass and not appear to give evidence in the case at all. If I had known what was coming I am quite certain that I should have stopped away; but I didn't know, and when I began to hint at my feelings at breakfast time, I was met by such a volley of arguments from my sister and her son, that I was fairly beaten at the first onslaught, and constrained to give in, and face what was before me with what courage I might. Both my sister and my nephew were very strong on its being a public duty, this that I had to perform, and both said that if I neglected it, I should be guilty of nothing less than a gross offence against the public, and I don't know what besides. I have always felt that I have been much too indifferent about what are called public matters, public losses, public gains, public rejoicings, and so on, limiting my interest too much to my own small circle and its belongings, so now I thought to myself that I was going to suffer for my selfishness, and that here was an opportunity of making amends in a sort of way. I didn't like the prospect before me a bit better after coming to this conclusion, I must confess.

"How any one is got to accept the post of magistrate, and to sit in a police court all day long examining into the dreadful cases which come up for trial, is more than I am able to conceive. There were one or two other cases to be disposed of before

mine came on, and my heart positively ached as I sat and listened to the miserable details of paltry roguery, and cheating, and theft, and at the wretched aspect of the half-developed, imperfect creatures who were implicated in them. Poor, servile, degraded wretches, what could be expected of beings who really, for the most part, seemed hardly a degree removed from the condition of the lowest specimens of the brute creation?

"By the time my case was called on I was reduced to a condition of the very lowest despondency by all that I had seen and heard, and felt more than ever the wish that it might have been possible for me to have evaded, by any means in the world, this dreadful public duty which was being forced upon me. Oh, dear! Here was I actually going to appear against one of those miserable creatures for whom I had been feeling so much compunction. Was there no way out of it?

"None. There was my culprit—even while the thought was in my mind—being shuffled into the place just vacated by a wretched woman who had got her "three months" for shop-lifting. There he was, and here I was, and the ordeal must be gone through. He was a very ill-looking fellow, of, I should say, about thirty years of age, and distinguished by a certain hang-dog aspect, which seemed to pervade him from head to foot. A big, powerful, sturdy man, with large, blue eyes, somewhat evasive, but quite the best part of him, and hair of a peculiar reddish hue, which reminded me of—of something that had happened long ago, but what it was I could not define or remember. The case was a very simple one, only too simple, in short. I had seen the prisoner snatch at my chain, and my nephew had caught him with the watch in his hand. As to the question of identity there was, unhappily, no doubt. I was eagerly on the look-out for any loop-hole of escape that might suggest itself, but I could find none. It was not possible for me to help admitting that I was able to identify the prisoner, and as to my nephew, his conviction amounted to positive certainty. He would know him by his hair, Sam said, if by nothing else, and could swear to him anywhere on the strength of its peculiar colour. His hair—where was it that I had seen hair like that? What was it that it reminded me of?

"Now, all the time that the examination of the prisoner was going on, I could not help being particularly struck by one circumstance, and that was, that whoever was speaking—whether the magistrate questioning the witnesses, or my nephew asserting the prisoner's identity, or the policeman describing how he had taken the charge—this repulsive-looking fellow throughout kept his eyes fixed on me, and on me alone, and never took them off me to look at any other person whatever. I suffered a good deal under this scrutiny, and once or twice was on the point of inquiring what it could possibly mean, but I abstained from doing so, from that dread of publicity which I have already spoken of, and which caused me to shrink from drawing on myself any larger share of public attention than fell to me inevitably in consequence of my unenviably prominent position.

"These being my feelings, it may be imagined in some degree what my sensations were when the prisoner, after being fully committed for trial, just as he was about to be removed from the dock, turned round towards the magistrate, and said, in a loud and distinct voice, 'If you please, your worship, I've something I want to say before I go—something to say to that lady as has just gave her evidence against me,' and he pointed with his hand to the place where I was standing.

"'To that lady?' said the magistrate. 'What can you possibly have to say to her? You have heard her evidence, and you can't gainsay it, can you?'

"'I don't want for to gainsay it,' the man answered; 'but what I do want for to say is that she,' and he pointed at me again, 'and the like of she, have helped to bring me to this here condition, and *have* brought me to it, too, as sure as you're a sitting there upon the bench and I'm a standing in this here dock.'

"'Is the prisoner known to you, madam?' said the magistrate, addressing me.

"I looked at the man more attentively than I had done before, but could not get hold of anything stronger than a faint suggestion that something about him dimly called to mind some bygone memory of past days.

"'It is barely possible,' I replied after a pause, 'that I may have seen him before, but even if I have I cannot say when or where, nor under what circumstances.'

"'Seen me before,' the man broke out. 'Seen me before. I should rayther think you had seen me before. What, don't you remember the little cove that used to sell matches and sweep the crossing at the

corner where you lived, just by 'Ans-place, and that you used to take notice of, and give money to, and pat him on the 'ed, and say what honest eyes he'd got, and what a hopen look? Ah, you remember, I see, fast enough. You remember, for I'm that very same boy, and what do you think of me now, and how would you like to pat my 'ed now, and how about the hopen look, and the honest eyes that caught sight of your watch-chain the other day in the crowd?'

"'What, little Mike!' I faltered, almost mechanically, 'are you——'

"'Yes, little Mike—big Mike now that I've grow'd up, and a precious grow up I've made of it. But what I want to tell you, and him,' pointing to the magistrate, 'and all the rest on you, is, that what I've grow'd to is only just what might have been expected and looked for.'

"I glanced towards the magistrate, half expecting that he would put a stop to this address. I believe that I rather hoped he would, for though I should have been willing to hear what my old acquaintance had to say in private, this public expostulation was almost more than I could bear. The magistrate, however, seemed in a certain way interested in the man's address and did not interfere.

"'Yes, it's your own doings,' the prisoner went on. 'Why did you go for to encourage me?' And he again addressed himself especially to unhappy me. 'Did you think it was kindness? It would 'a been a precious sight kinder if you'd just cotched old of me by the 'air that you was so fond of—though carrots was the best name I got for it from the other boys—and walked me off to a prison, or a school, or some place or another were I might have been kep' out of mischief and been learnt a trade, and how to get a living otherways than off the streets, That's what would have been real kindness, instead of praising of my good looks, and giving me sixpences and 'ot dinners on the doorstep, all for running alongside of you with a stump of a broom in my hand, and grinning and flattering of you hup. Yes, and then what do you do? Why you gets tired of me after a time and won't 'ave nothink to say to me, and calls me impudent and troublesome, and then I ain't long finding out that there's other ways of scraping a living besides cadging about with a broom, and so I gets from one thing to another, till it comes to something like this 'ere. For this ain't the first time, mind you, that I've been in trouble, nor it ain't likely, so far as I can see, to be the last.'

"'Why it ain't common sense,' the man continued, 'to do as you done. Why don't you think what you're doing, all on you? Why don't you use your reason and your hintellects? What can come of letting a lot of little beggars run wild about the streets pretending to sell things, and never getting into the way of doing somethink for their living. Why you're just breeding up a set of young thieves and tramps, as careful as if you'd set about it a purpose.'

"'And now, governor,' the man concluded, addressing the policeman who stood beside him, 'we'll move off if you're agreeable. I've said what I'd got to say, and I'm ready to go back to my old apartments at Millbank, or wherever it is, and I hope I shall find the lining aired and heverything comf'able.'

"And now, my dear," the old lady concluded, "I've brought my story to an end. My friend is still undergoing his sentence—after his trial at the Old Bailey he was committed to prison for twelve months—but when he comes out I shall certainly make an endeavour to find the means of giving him a fresh start of some kind or another. For I do hold that to a certain extent he was right in his accusation, and that a certain measure of responsibility attaches to me for having helped to start him in about the most hopeless way of life in which any human creature could possibly be embarked."

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XII. THE LONDON LAWYER.

THE rector stepped softly into the darkened room, and closing the door behind him advanced towards the bed, and seated himself in a chair by its side. Madge lay with her head propped up by pillows, over which her long brown hair, here and there clotted with a deep dark stain, and damp from the fomentations which had been applied, lay streaming. Her head was turning restlessly from side to side, and a cry of agony, not sharp, not broken, but one low-pitched, long-continued wail, in which her acute suffering often expressed itself, broke from her lips. At first she seemed not

to notice that any one had entered the room, and it was not until the rector had first lightly touched her hand, and then taken it gently between his own, that she ceased moaning, and, calming herself by a great effort, saw her friend seated by her side. Even then she seemed either not to recognise him, or to forget the circumstances under which he was present, for she pressed the hand that was free hard upon her forehead, and closed her eyes again for some moments before she spoke.

Then she said, "I know now why you are here."

"You sent for me," said the rector, in his gentlest tone; "you told the servant you wished to see me."

"Yes," she said, "I recollect it all now. My mind is a little confused, I am afraid, and when I first saw you sitting there and holding my hand just as you used to do in the old days when I had the fever, I thought that time had come back again, and wondered whether all the things which have occurred in the interval had been seen by me in a dream. I wish they had, oh, how I wish they had!"

"Your strength is not yet sufficiently returned to enable you to think, much less to speak of anything which is certain to excite your brain," said the rector, bending over her. "Margaret," he added, as if replying to an impatient gesture on her part, "I must speak plainly to you; your state is most critical, and if you excite yourself, your life, or, what is perhaps worse, your reason, is in imminent peril."

"You mean that I shall go mad," said Madge, turning her eyes upon him and clutching his hand. "If I do, it will be from reticence, not from speaking. You have been often pleased to praise my common sense; believe me it has never been more active or more capable of doing me service than at the present moment. I must know from you what has occurred this night; you must tell me all without attempting to suppress or disguise anything. Do you hear me? you must, I say!"

The rector hesitated a moment before he said, "Will you not wait until Dr. Chenoweth, who is coming up again to-night, has seen and spoken to you?"

"This is no matter for doctor's decision. You, best of all men in the world, can judge how I can bear up against illness and trouble; you alone in the world know the story of my life, and what I have gone through. I tell you I must hear of to-night's occurrence at once and from you!"

The rector bowed his head. "If I refuse to answer any question you may put, or stop in the midst of my recital, you will understand, Margaret, that it is solely on your own account."

"I understand," she replied; then involuntarily sinking her voice, she asked, "Sir Geoffry—is he—is he dead?"

"He is."

As the rector spoke, he felt a convulsive thrill in the hand that lay within his own, and the pallor of Madge's face grew yet more intense and ghastly, but she evinced no other sign of emotion.

"Tell me all about it," she murmured.

Mr. Drage once more hesitated, until prompted by a nervous hand clasp. "When the servants, whose attention had been aroused by the sound of the struggle and the crashing of the overturned furniture and the broken glass, collected their senses sufficiently to rush in a body to the library, they found a man bending over Sir Geoffry's dead body, and endeavouring to raise it from the ground on which it lay to the couch; your presence on the spot was not noticed for some moments, not, indeed, until the man had been secured and removed into the hall."

"Secured, do you say? Is the man, then, in custody, and is he known?"

"He is; he was recognised by Riley on the instant; by a servant who had seen him on the occasion of the previous visit; finally, by Captain Cleethorpe, who spoke to you about him in the afternoon, when you expressed your dread lest he should come to——"

"Ah, my God!" screamed Madge, supporting herself on both hands, and drawing herself towards him. "Of whom are you speaking?"

"Of Sir Geoffry's son, George Heriot."

But at that instant Madge's strength gave way, and she fell prone on her face with outstretched arms, and hands working convulsively.

The rector gently raised her, and laid her back upon the pillow. He was about to ring the bell to summon assistance, when he saw her eyes open and her lips move.

"Stay," she murmured, "for pity's sake. This is now a matter of life and death, which must be talked out at once between you and me alone; don't fear for me, I am strong enough; but I could not let things rest thus, even if I knew that to speak of them would kill me. What proofs are there against this young man?"

"Many and various, and most con-

vincing. Riley, sorely against his will—for he is almost heart-broken at the turn affairs have taken—will be called upon to prove the original quarrel between the father and son; when Sir Geoffry told him that he had discarded and disowned his son, whose name was never again to be mentioned in the household. Riley will further prove that on a recent occasion the young man came to Springside to seek an interview with his father, entered the house at the same time and much in the same manner as he entered it to-night; and that he, Riley, was finally ordered by the general to show George Heriot the door, and never give him admittance again. Cleethorpe, who had some slight acquaintance with young Heriot several years ago, will speak to meeting him in the afternoon, and to the young man's evident desire to avoid recognition; and I should almost think, Margaret, if you are sufficiently recovered, that you will be called upon to state why you were so strongly anxious that a meeting between the two men should be prevented."

"All these facts that you have alleged will be taken as reasons and motives, probable inducements for him to commit the crime. What proof is there that he did commit it?"

"As circumstantial evidence it can hardly be stronger. He is seized upon the spot immediately after the commission of the crime; the body of the victim is in his arms; his clothes are stained with blood. When you couple this with the enmity known to exist between him and the murdered man, with the fact of his presence at the place from which he had been more than once ejected and warned, with the fact that he evidently shunned discovery and recognition—witness his behaviour to Captain Cleethorpe—however unwilling one may be to believe in the existence of such monstrous guilt, the charge seems to me impossible of refutation."

"The crime is one which it would have been impossible for George Heriot to have committed."

"One would think so," said the rector, "but still, sons have been known——"

"It is not as a son that I speak of George Heriot; it is of himself," cried Madge. "He is too gentle-hearted, too brave, too noble, to injure any human being, much less his father, whom he always held in affection and reverence, notwithstanding the bad treatment he had received."

"You speak as if you had known this young man, Margaret," said the rector, inquiringly.

"Then," said Madge, "I speak what is the fact. I knew him intimately for two years, saw him constantly, shared his confidence, knew the inmost workings of his mind, and never saw aught that was mean or dishonourable. And he has been arrested for this crime!"

"The evidence was so strong," said Mr. Drage, "that it would have been impossible to avoid arresting him, even if the expression of public opinion had not been loud against him."

"That evidence shall be overthrown; that public opinion turned in his favour!" cried Madge.

"That can only be done by directly proving George Heriot's innocence," said the rector. "And who can do that?"

"I can," said Madge. "I, who stood by, powerless, and saw the attack made upon Sir Geoffry, which I was helpless to prevent: and who saw my dear friend and master struggling with a man whose back was then towards me, but whom I afterwards recognised, when, after Sir Geoffry had fallen prostrate, he ran past me, and hurled me to the ground."

"And this man was not George Heriot?"

"No, that I can safely and positively swear."

"Thank God!" said the rector, reverently raising his hands, "thank God for that! That our old friend should meet a sudden and a violent death is in itself awful enough, without the horrible idea that he died by his son's hand."

"What is the first step to be taken that Gerald can be at once set free?"

"Nothing can be done to-night, Margaret," said the rector, quietly, "and it is absolutely essential that you should now have thorough quiet, and not move until you have been again seen by the doctor."

"But am I to lie here while he remains in prison with this fearful charge still hanging over him; with the belief in his guilt yet universal? Oh, it is monstrous to think of such a thing. I cannot and will not bear it!"

"Margaret, listen to reason. No informal steps can be taken; all our proceedings henceforward must be taken under legal guidance, and nothing can be done to rescue this unhappy young man from the position in which he is placed, until his public examination."

"His public examination! Will he have to take his trial in court?"

"He will first be examined before the magistrates, and upon the result of that examination depends whether he will be sent for trial or not; that result, meanwhile, rests upon the quality of the evidence which you will give on his behalf. And you must remember, Margaret, that your evidence will not merely have the effect of clearing George Heriot, but will have the effect of putting the officers of justice on the track of the actual murderer."

"What!" cried Madge, starting up in consternation. "Is that so?"

"Unquestionably. You, in your position, must not merely show that this young man did not commit the deed, but that some one else did. A minute's reflection will show you that George Heriot's innocence cannot be established until some other man is proved to be guilty. Who that other man is, the magistrates will look to you to say."

Madge fell back on her pillow in a state of collapse. "I could not do it," she murmured, "I could not do it."

"Could not do it," repeated the rector, bending over her in astonishment. "Do you know what you are saying? You could not, or, rather, you would not give up to justice the name of the atrocious villain who cruelly murdered a weak and unoffending old man. Margaret, did I hear you aright?"

But still she only murmured, "I could not do it!"

"Then will it go hard with George Heriot's chance of escape," said the rector.

"Oh, no," moaned Madge, tossing restlessly on her pillow, "the magistrates will hear me. He must be saved."

"Then," persisted the rector, "you must give up the name of the man whom you saw struggling with Sir Geoffry, and by whom you were hurled to the ground."

But Madge only murmured, "I could not do it! I could not do it!"

The rector rose from his chair and began pacing the room.

"Margaret," he exclaimed, stopping short by the bedside, and again taking her hand, "do you know the importance of what you are saying, and the effect of the determination you have arrived at? Do you know that this young man's life is in your hands? That according to the weight attaching to the testimony which you may be able to give, he will either be set free or sent to the gibbet? And yet do you hesitate?"

"He shall be set free," cried Madge; "my testimony shall fully clear him of the charge."

"And at the same time that it does so, it must implicate another. That is the point I want to urge upon you; that is the point which you do not seem to see."

"I see it fully, perfectly, and plainly," said Madge, "in all its most horrible significance. Oh, if you did but know what you are asking me to do, in bidding me give up the name of the real criminal! If you did but know what accusations of heartlessness and wickedness you are bidding me call down upon myself!"

"Stay," cried the rector, suddenly again rising from his seat, and clasping her arm with agitated, trembling hand. "When you first came to this place, the hand of Providence led me to you, that I might be of service to you, a service which you afterwards repaid a hundred-fold by your care of my motherless daughter. Since then we have been thrown constantly together, and you have shown that you believed in my devotion to you by making me the confidant of your life's history. Is this confidence to be brought suddenly to an end, at this most momentous crisis of your life, or is it to be extended? Speak."

"I allow all you say," said Madge. "I grant that to no one perhaps in the world am I so thoroughly known as to you; but I do not see what you now wish me to do!"

"To let me be to you now still your confidant and adviser. It is impossible for you, you say, to make public the name of this criminal. Can you not tell it to me, that I may consider what, under the circumstances, is best to be done?"

"I cannot, I dare not!"

The rector reflected for an instant, then with a sudden lighting up of his face, he turned to her suddenly and said: "Suppose I, too, have my secret in this matter; suppose I, by certain chance, know who committed this crime, and tell the name to you—what then?"

"It is impossible for you to have this information; the secret is known to me alone on earth," said Madge, gazing in astonishment at his eagerness.

"Not to you alone!" he cried, bending closer to her and dropping his voice. "It is known to the murderer—to your husband!"

Madge uttered a short sharp cry. "How did you learn that?" she whispered.

"No matter how I learned it, so that I know it now, while there is yet time for

me to consider what is best to be done. Margaret, you must trust in me and leave all to me now, as you have done before. You know how thoroughly I appreciate the difficulties of your position. You know how sacredly I will guard your name and fame; you know that this matter in which life, and more than life, are at stake, requires the fullest and calmest consideration.

Just then the servant, tapping at the door, announced that Doctor Chenoweth had arrived, and was waiting to see Mrs. Pickering. And the rector took his leave of Madge, promising to be with her early the next day.

During the various phases of sorrow through which the Reverend Onesiphorus Drage had passed in his lifetime; when his lot was cast amongst felons, who either openly jeered at his ministration, or pretended to believe in it, with a view to the improvement of their position; when the wife of his youth was gradually fading away before his eyes; when he himself was wrestling with temptation, striving to do what he imagined to be his duty towards that dead wife by blotting Madge's image from his mind; he had never spent a night of greater agony than that which he went through after quitting Wheatcroft. Not once throughout the night did he miss hearing the clock's weary record of the passing hour; and as he lay tossing restlessly on his bed, the difficulties surrounding the case which he had taken under his charge seemed to become increased and magnified. How George Heriot was to be saved, except by the sacrifice of Philip Vane, the rector could find no means to discover; and though Margaret had not absolutely told him the name of the murderer, he had learned it under such circumstances as would render it almost impossible for him to disclose it to the law. Harassed by these two contending emotions; now nearly driven to madness by the reflection that the young man of whom Margaret thought and spoke so highly was lying in prison, accused of an atrocious crime, of which he was wholly innocent; now racked with fear at the idea of being compelled to divulge the secret gleaned from Margaret, whom he so deeply loved, the wretched rector became thoroughly worn out towards morning, and as the first signs of renewed life were audible in the house, he fell into a deep slumber.

From this he was aroused by a loud knocking at his door, and by his servant's informing him that a gentleman, whose card she had brought with her, was in the study very anxious to see him. Taking the card from the servant's hand, and reading on it, to his intense astonishment, "Mr. L. Moss, Thavies Inn," the rector bade her say that he would be down in a very few minutes, and immediately plunged into a cold bath which was awaiting him. Much refreshed in body and brain by this proceeding, Mr. Drage on emerging was yet unable to understand the object of Mr. Moss's visit.

"Moss," he repeated, glancing at the card, "Moss, of Thavies Inn; surely that was the name of the firm of London attorneys, so celebrated for their conduct of criminal business, whom Mr. Drew said he had retained. What on earth has the man come to me for? The last person in the world to give him any information or help, more especially situated as I now am. What on earth can he have come to me for?"

Then Mr. Drage thought that the best way to obtain this information was to finish dressing himself, and go down and see.

The rector had not formed much idea of what a London criminal attorney would probably be like, but on entering the study he was certainly astonished at the comparative youth of the gentleman whom he saw before him. Mr. Leopold Moss was a man of apparently not more than thirty years of age, with sharp aquiline profile, and keen bright eyes. He was dressed very plainly, wore no jewellery, save a thin strip of gold watch-chain, and, until thoroughly warmed to his work, spoke in a soft voice, and with a certain amount of what was almost diffidence. But, if you inquired amongst those who knew, you would learn that there was no man in the legal profession to be compared to Mr. Leopold Moss in his manner of grasping a subject, or in his method of dealing with its details. In the conduct of certain great legal commercial cases, with the woof of which a strong criminal warp was intermingled, he had held his own against the ablest men at the bar, and even the great Mr. Barnstaple, Q.C., had admitted that nothing was more pleasant than to be instructed by Leopold Moss, nothing more vexatious than to be opposed by him. "Our dear Leopold," Mr. Barnstaple would remark, "has not the misfortune to be like myself, a man of pleasure. He prefers Chitty to Kitty, and Blackstone to Burgundy,

consequently he gives one the most confounded amount of trouble to be prepared for the precedents and opinions which we know he will bring forward against us. Our dear Leopold is an exceptional instance, but great ability is seldom allied to virtue; the latter charming quality more often accompanies stupidity, and the two together form the favourite compound out of which judges are made."

But although Mr. Leopold Moss, by the exigencies of his profession, was compelled to devote a large portion of his time to study, which in itself possessed a fascination for him, he by no means led the hermit life which Mr. Barnstaple ascribed to him. A knowledge of man was, as he rightly imagined, as useful to him as a knowledge of law, and he went a good deal into society (not amongst those peculiar classes more affected by Mr. Barnstaple), where his strange experiences and conversational powers rendered him a great favourite.

Such was Mr. Leopold Moss. He rose from his chair as the rector entered the room, and returning his host's salutation commenced by saying:

"You are doubtless surprised to see me, Mr. Drage, not having had any intimation of my coming. The fact is, I have come down here about that bad business that happened last night, and have called upon you to ask for certain information and advice on behalf of my client Mr Heriot."

"Your client Mr. Heriot?" exclaimed the rector, in surprise. "Why, Mr. Moss, I understood that your firm was instructed to get up the case for the prosecution."

"It was rather a complicated matter," said Mr. Moss. "Mr. Drew, of this place, did telegraph up to instruct our people, but the telegram did not arrive until late in the evening, long after business hours, and was sent on to my house. I was dining out, and found it on my return home, but in the mean time I had engaged myself to act on the other side."

"How was that? By whom were you retained?"

"It came about in this way. I was dining at the monthly meeting of a little society of antiquaries to which I belong, when Doctor Asprey, the well-known physician, who is one of our members, was summoned from the table. This so frequently happens that it has become a joke against the doctor, and on his return we were prepared to banter him as usual; but he made his way straight to me, and asked me to come out into the ante-room to talk over a matter on important business. When the door was closed, he told me he had just returned from seeing a Mrs. Entwistle, who appears to be some relative of the accused, and a young lady named Pierrepoint——"

"Good heavens! Rose Pierrepoint," interrupted the rector.

"Yes," said Mr. Moss, "I think that was the name. At all events, this Miss Pierrepoint is engaged to be married to young Heriot. They were in an awful state of mind, for the superintendent down here, at Heriot's request, had telegraphed to Miss Pierrepoint the news of the arrest, and the ground of the accusation. Their first thought was to send for Doctor Asprey, who seems to be a kind of ami de la maison at Mrs. Entwistle's, and his first thought, after comforting the women, was to hurry back and secure me. I returned with him to Mrs. Entwistle's, and we sat talking long into the night. In the course of the conversation I learned that you had at one time warmly befriended Miss Rose Pierrepoint and her sister, Mrs.—Mrs. Pickering," he said, referring to some notes, "who was housekeeper to the late Sir Geoffry; and I determined upon coming down by the first train, which left Paddington at six o'clock, and seeing you before I took any further steps in the matter. And now if you will please tell me, as succinctly as you can, all the facts of which you are in possession, but not stating any impressions which you may have formed."

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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XXI. THE END OF CHRISTOPHER'S ROMANCE.

So the little party returned home under a cloud of gloom. As Miss Martha sat down thankfully under her own roof she called herself an old fool for castle-building and match-making, for worrying herself at her time of life when she ought to have peace. May felt like a stranger in returning to her home. Something had gone out of her life, and something had come into it, since she had last crossed the threshold of her familiar room. But that was her own affair, and the walls must not know it. Paul looked pale and worn when he took his place at table with them that evening; as unlike as possible to the joyful Paul who had sat down there on that first evening, now more than a month ago.

He had fallen back so completely under the old shadow, that he was saying to himself as he ate his bread, that he was a man accursed, who could never expect to be loved. Already here was the working of his evil influence. These friends who had gladly welcomed him had grown cold and constrained. A shadow had come over May who had been so blithe with him at the first. He would take leave of her to-night, and for the future think no more of being happy.

The little brown parlour was full of starlight, when Miss Martha went out to talk to old Nannie about the pigs. And Paul snatched the opportunity, and began to say farewell to May.

He began to say it so suddenly, she was so utterly without the key to his meaning, that half of his wild things had been said before she began to guess what he was saying.

"I feared I should bring my shadow with me," he was declaring when she caught the drift of his words, "and I tried to keep away, and I could not. The memory of your face haunted me, and brought me back to your side. I love you as no one will ever love you again. What does it matter? You pity me I know. Some day I may be glad to remember it, but now it cannot help me. For I have been fool enough to hope that I could win your entire love: that you could save me from a curse; that I might live and die as blest a man as love ever made happy. Your pity has twice warned me, and yet I speak to you like this; but it is because you will never see me any more. I chill you with my presence, and I am going away. I trust you may be happy. I hope that Mr. Lee may love and cherish——"

Here Paul paused and panted, and looked able to punish Mr. Lee if the devotion of that unknown rival should be found faulty in its measure. Before he could finish his sentence the parlour door was thrown open, and Bridget thrust herself in, with a sly subdued grin upon her buxom face.

"There's a gintleman outbye wants to see ye, miss. Despert anxious he is, miss, if ye plase."

"A gentleman!" said May. With new life dancing at her heart, with an inclination to laugh and to cry, with fear and delight, and a slight sense of the ridiculous all struggling within her at once, she seized upon some flower-pots and began settling them in their stand, that Bridget might not see her face and the shaking of her hands. A gentleman! Bridget's announcement was as strange as if she had

said, "there is a picket of police come to arrest you." But May did not know at the moment whether it was a strange thing or not. She only wished that Bridget would go away, so that Paul might speak again.

"Yes, miss. A fine big gintleman wid a spankin' horse. Misther Lee is his name, an' he says——"

Paul had turned his back upon the unwelcome Bridget, and was standing at the open window looking out. When Bridget said "Misther Lee" he put his hand on the sill, vaulted quickly out, and disappeared.

May sat down and stared pitifully at her handmaiden. Had the lass been but away she might have held out a finger to keep Paul by her side. But Bridget's presence was a broad fact, in every sense of the word; and Paul was gone away. Not for ever, oh, no, not for ever. That would be too mad, when she had not even answered him nor said good-bye.

"He said, miss," went on Bridget in her blissful ignorance, "that he would not come in, but axes as a faviour that yoursel' would spake a word wid him outbye."

"Very well; let him wait. Bridget, go for my handkerchief, if you please, on the table, in the drawer, in my room."

Bridget gone, she flew to the window, peeped across the sash, thrust herself across the sash. She could see faintly the moors, the meadows, the white path, the distant stile. But there was no Paul anywhere to be seen.

"Paul!" she whispered softly. "Paul!" she wailed more audibly. But he was not lurking anywhere within the reach of a timid voice. She drew back and leaned, sickening, against the wall. And then Bridget came back with the handkerchief, and then there was nothing to be done but to go out and meet Christopher Lee.

She did not doubt as she stood yet a minute longer, trying to steady her nerves, that Christopher had come to tell her of his full happiness, as she had bade him. She remembered that the curious crisis of his fate must be either past or close at hand. Perhaps he was already married; or perhaps he would be to-morrow. She was glad for his sake, but it was not so easy to spend good wishes on his bride, whose vanity had so wantonly wrought mischief. Yet she could now afford to laugh at the silly blunders that had been made. She could laugh, or she could cry, but there was no time for doing either. She must go out and show some courtesy to the visitor.

She stepped out into the starlight, looking right and left and over her shoulder, hoping to see Paul coming back. She could not but think still that he was sulking among the tombstones, or stamping out his passion behind some hedge. How she would laugh at him by-and-bye when he would come to finish his tragedy! How she would tease him about being so daunted by an unreality!

Yes; there was Christopher Lee, surely enough, in this unwonted place, and at this untimely hour. Till she really saw him, there in the night, at Monasterlea, she did not know how odd it was. It was very odd, and of course Paul thought it so. A little boy was holding a horse out on the road, and the rider was walking up and down by the ruined cloisters. In the clearness of the half-dark May could see that his clothes were white with dust, and his face like one distracted.

"Oh, Miss Mourne!" he said, hurrying to meet her, and grasping her hands painfully. "It is kind of you to come and speak to a ruined man!"

"Ruined! Oh, no, Mr. Lee, not that!" cried May, with an overwhelming sense of everything in the world having gone wrong at the same time.

"Quite ruined; utterly ruined!" said Christopher, grimly lingering on, and emphasising the fatal word.

"But how ruined? Surely it cannot be that Katherine——"

"Don't mention her!" he cried. "Don't name her name! A cruel, cold-blooded woman. Oh, I was warned and I would not listen! How could I believe the woman I loved, and who had vowed herself to me, to be a heartless actress, a mere shameful coquette? Now I am paying the penalty of my folly. Oh, I am maddened at the bare thought of it; that for months she has been laughing at me, while she made me play the fool for her amusement. She owned it to me to-day, when she laughed in my face. She laughed again when I was idiot enough to threaten her with what the world would think of her. She smiled and beamed, and it was all rapture to her, every reproach, every groan that I uttered; for I did give her this glory—I groaned."

The young man suited the action to the word, and looked fiercely at May, and over her head, as if she and the whole world had been to blame in this matter. Then, having gathered up his scattered breath, he made a fresh dash at his wrongs.

"Yes, I groaned," he went on, "and that gave her delight. She had looked forward to that hour, had willed it and planned it, so that a man might be drowned in ruin to give her beauty an unholy triumph. She will wear my wrecked life as a feather in her cap. Let her wear it, then! and may it be very becoming to her, especially when she is old and faded, and shall long for a kind heart near her own, and shall not find it! In the mean time let her world make a goddess of her, and let it join in her laugh against the idiot who is lost, lost for her sake!"

"No, no, not lost!" said May, in great awe of this excited grief, yet not knowing what to say.

"Not lost, do you say? Do you know that if I am a married man in three weeks hence I shall be the owner of twenty thousand a year for the remainder of my life? Think of what it means, that twenty thousand a year. It means to be a gentleman, to be of some use in the world, to have liberty to enjoy the sweet pleasant things of life. And all this I might have had, with somebody to be loved by, and to share it with, only for *her*. And oh! how I loved her and trusted in her!"

He buried his face in his hands, and sobbed like a child.

"And now I am a beggar!" he said, looking up again savagely. "A beggar, and a fool before the world. I have broken my mother's heart; I have destroyed my own future; I will not endure to live any longer."

"You are talking wildly," said May, touching his arm. "You cannot mean what you say. You are no coward?"

"It does not matter what you call me," he said; "call me anything you please. I am a coward, if that means a man who will not outlive his ruin and disgrace. I came here to-night to say good-bye to you, May Mourne. You were very kind to me, and you are the last person I shall look on in this world. I will not see my mother's face again. You will, maybe, be good to her when I am gone, for I have sworn not to live another day!"

He was speaking in an unnaturally high-pitched voice, like a suppressed shriek. It was getting wilder every moment. May was thoroughly terrified, but controlled herself with an effort.

"Then you must break your oath!" she said, in a strong, distinct voice, which shocked him from its contrast with her former pleading tones.

He gazed at her in silence.

"You must break your rash oath," she repeated. "You see I am not afraid of you, though you are so desperate. I declare that I will not let you go away from this place to-night until you have sworn to me that you will do yourself no hurt!"

"I might break that oath also," he said.

"No, you would not, and I will tell you why. You would not throw away your soul, because you have lost your love and your fortune. And if you do not give me the promise at once," she added, passing her arm through his, "I will hold you like this until you will give it to me."

He looked at her wonderingly. His passion seemed to have cooled down. He put her hand gently from his arm, and began walking rapidly up and down under the shadow of the cloisters. May stood by, silent; urging nothing; but watching. She saw that he was deliberating, or seemed to be so doing. He saw her standing there, patient, watchful, resolved. Every time he turned he could see the gracious white figure waiting unwearied, upon a mound of graves, whither she had followed him, and where he had left her; with a broken cross at her feet, and the stars about her head.

At last he approached her, humbly and quietly.

"You see I am quite calm now. I will rave no more." But he was not calm at all, though his voice was subdued, and there was a very strange wildness in his eyes. "Shall I dare to speak to you everything that is in my heart at this moment? Shall I tell you of a whisper that an angel has whispered to me?"

"Yes," said May, "for angels whisper nothing that is horrible and wrong. You know that I am your friend, and I will help you all that such a weak friend may help."

He drew her hand through his arm, and placed it where she had before placed it herself. She did not hinder, because she was bent on saving him. They walked on a few steps, and then Christopher said abruptly:

"May Mourne, will you marry me?"

"Marry you!" she cried.

"Yes," said he, "me. One who has been raving to you about the loss of another woman. A man who has been tricked and blinded, but has got his eyes opened at last. A man who can see you faithful and good, and can curse the days he ever loved one less noble. I will worship you all the years of my life. I will be a good husband

to you. I will strive to be a good man, in order to do you honour. I will have gold to share with you, gold which you will have bestowed on me as if you had brought it for a dowry. May Mourne, I will love you. Will you be my wife?"

"Oh, no," said May, "oh, no!"

"Ah! there it is," he cried. "I knew that you would refuse. But I can plead. You think I love Katherine Archbold—— Nay, I hate her; I hate her!"

"Hush," said May. "Indeed, I am not jealous of her."

"God bless you! What is it then? Whisper, and tell me what it is that you are afraid of. Not of Christopher Lee? He would not hurt any one, though he was near drowning himself in the river an hour ago. He is a poor wrecked creature, whom you can save if you will. He has loved you already longer than you think. How beautiful you looked with all the stars about your head! *She* never had the stars about her head, curse her! There is a hard, cruel, blazing sun always shining and burning round her head, that scorches men's eyes, and withers up their brains."

He was lashing himself into a fury again. It was such a strange kind of fury, that May felt more frightened for him than annoyed for herself. She thought of him less as a sane man than as one sick and delirious.

"Mr. Lee," she said, "will you come in and rest awhile? You are sadly tired, and you want refreshment."

"I want you," he said, wildly, "I want only you. You will be rest and refreshment, and all that I need. I will make you a princess. I will pour gold into your lap. You will rest my head on your knee, and cool it with your hands. It is burning hot, it is full of fire—and nobody will give me a drink of cold water, because it is known that I am a beggar."

"Come in," said May, soothingly, and drawing him gently, "come in with me, and I will give you water—anything you like." She had felt the burning touch of his hand upon her own, and she dreaded the strange glare which she saw in his eyes. The man had got a fever, and his life might be in her hands.

"I will not go," he said, "I will not move, until you promise me that you will marry me to-morrow. Katherine! Katherine!" he cried, gnashing his teeth, and grasping her hands until he almost crushed the slight fingers, "promise that you will marry me to-morrow. Promise, or I will drown myself this night!"

"Nay, come in," said May, coaxingly, while she shivered with fear. "I am tired and cold. Come in, and we will talk about it."

"Curse you!" he said, flinging back her hands with such force that she nearly fell. "Curse your smooth promises, and your coaxing, and your putting off. I will have no more of it." And with a cry like that of some hurt animal, he bounded from her side, and rushed, like a madman as he was, across the graveyard, towards the river.

But May was as swift-footed as a deer. She could run to save a life. She had no blinding flashes of the fire of madness before her eyes to make her stumble, and she had, besides, the cunning of sanity, and a natural presence of mind. She knew all the short cuts about Monasterlea. By means of her wit, and her speed, she met Christopher Lea before he reached the river side. She was a quarter of a mile from home, and she was at the mercy of a strong man bereft of reason; but she was not afraid.

She laid hold of him and clasped her two hands across his arm.

"Come with me, dear," she said. "I am your mother. You would not hurt me, Christopher? Not hurt your old mother?" For he was wrestling with her.

At the last words he stood still, as if shocked. "Hurt my mother!" he said. "Who asked such a question? When did I hurt you, mother?"

"Never indeed, dear," said May. "And you will not now. I want you to help me with your strong arm, Christopher. Help me up the hill, and into the house."

He obeyed her, gentle as a lamb, but it was a terrible walk. Every moment she expected that he would break from her, but she kept the firm locked clasp of her two hands on his arm. At the door she met old Nannie and Miss Martha, going out to look for her in some dismay. She signed to them, and they gradually understood her. And after some fright and difficulty the two old women got Christopher put to bed; where a man sick of a fever ought to be. And then a doctor was sent for to the nearest post town; and the distraught lover began a hard fight for his life.

Later he wrote to his mother in his convalescence:

"I am sorry for having brought so much affliction upon you, for I know that vexation must have been the cause of your illness. I am wise now, though my wisdom

is bought at a great cost. I could wish that I had remained delirious for a few more days, for the crisis of my life would have been then quite over. After all, it makes only a little bit of difference, though it will be tedious counting the hours going past, and I dare say I shall lie awake to hear the clock strike twelve on next Friday night. Afterwards it will be something to tell you, the tenderness and care I have met with here. At present I am weak, as you will see by my scrawl. I have some recollection of making an ass of myself by asking Miss Mourne to marry me (not the old lady) just before I fell into my fever. Of course I was not in my senses, and she pretends to forget it. Would to God I had been lucky enough to meet her first! But the other would have out-dazzled her, I suppose, and it would have been just the same thing. I have been thinking that there are attorney friends of yours in Dublin who would take me into their office. . . .

"She is getting some flowers for me in her garden at this moment. I know they are for me, for she brings them fresh every day. She seems to me like an angel, if angels could be so sympathetic and practical in their ways. There is something in her swift movements, and the flutter of her white dress, that suggests the idea of wings. It is the quaintest garden that you ever set your eyes upon. A place that Nathaniel Hawthorne would delight in, when the sun shines across it, stopping with an intense frown of shade at every obstacle in his way. The manner in which cloisters, and arches, and tombstones peep through all the holes in the bloom has an oddity and charm for any one who has time to think. I have plenty of time now. . . ."

Mrs. Lee uttered her customary long lamentation over this letter, and declared to her nurse and doctor that her boy must be still raving, or he could not think of gardens at such a time. While there was life there was hope, and, as he had returned to his senses, there were still five long days of life before his future need be buried out of sight of the prosperous world. Get her her shawls and her bonnet, for her pains were much better. The poor lady had been suffering from an attack of rheumatism, brought on by her eccentric flight to Dublin from Camlough. Her patience had suddenly expired one night, about midnight, and she had bribed one of the coachmen to take her away before dawn.

May did not feel at all like an angel, whatever she may have looked, as she moved among her flower-beds. Angels ought at least to be quite happy, and at peace with all men—including women. And May was not at peace with all men, nor all women. She was very angry with Katherine, whose vanity had led her into that unfortunate mistake which she had made. And it was hard to forgive Christopher—though so easy to be good to him—whose coming had driven Paul out of her sight. For Paul had not been heard of since that night, and May's maiden modesty must hinder her from asking about him or looking for him. Aunt Martha would keep saying: "I wonder what *can* have happened to that young man!" and "Upon my word he has treated us very badly!" But still he never came back along the path across the moor. His farm-house still smoked with its chimney thrust out of the hollow; but the people there knew nothing of him, except that he had paid them and gone away.

May was sorry for Christopher, yet while he was lying desperately ill, and she was creeping about all day with ice for his head and medicine from the doctor, she could not have denied herself to be unutterably happy all the time. She was glorying in her good fortune, and looking out through every loophole to see her lover coming back. And she triumphed over Katherine as an angel could not have done; but yet Paul did not appear. It grew to be not wonderful to see her, who had been so quick about her business, standing with Christopher's glass of wine or basin of custard in her hands, gazing, with eyes that were very strange, out of some window or open door. Any ordinary observer would have said that she rejoiced because Christopher was ill, and was in trouble because he got better. For Christopher was growing well again; was able to write a letter, and to follow her with admiring eyes while she picked blossoms from her rose-trees. Mr. Lee's state of health did not much affect her spirits; but she had rather he had died than that Paul should not come back.

So went over the sad, profitless, golden September days. Fruit was ripe, hay was made, and the last of the sweet rose-tribe blushed like rubies on their withering trees. The summer greens were waning in the Woods of Tobereevil, and richer glories were stealing into their place. Here and there the foliage of an over-wearied autumn bough had already fluttered with

little gold wings to the ground. The birds' notes were deeper and more rare than they had been a month ago, and between the glittering links of radiant days a heavy leaden one now and then intruded itself. The harvest moonlight was so bright at nights that you might have gleaned the meadows by it, or picked pebbles on a beach, and the creepers were all afire among the ivy over the ruins, and had licked a portion of the cottage into their flames. Miss Martha was fattening cows for the fair, and between this anxious business and her cares for a sick stranger, had little time to give more than a regretful thought to Paul. Her wonder had abated after three weeks of his absence, and she had made up her mind to be disappointed in him. She feared that he was not untainted by the oddities of his race. She dropped some tears in secret to the memory of her friend Elizabeth, and owned that her promise was very difficult in the fulfilment.

But the younger heart that was beating in the house could not so easily let him go: could not so easily be consoled by cows, and the best prices at the fair. It sickened at every word that was not news of Paul; and the only things that talked of him were the pigeons, which mourned over him incessantly every hour in the day. But they never had any news; nothing but unintelligible moans and warblings. The sad night breeze began to tell her from under the eaves that she had lived up to the highest point of her life, and must now travel backward and downward. And the worst of it was that there had been made such a great mistake; it being somebody else's will than that of the good and bountiful God which had thus thrust her back on the fair threshold of a beautiful fate, and had left her all forlorn in the very blush of her surprise. She began to pity Aunt Martha, with a pity which she had never thought her worthy of before; for she, too, had lost her love, and the bright promise of her youth. But then she had lived down her grief, and could fatten cows for the fair; could speak of Simon of Tobereevil, and laugh in the same breath; while there could be no pity great enough in the world to avail the loneliness of May Mourne, spinster, even when the twenty years of her age should come, in time, to be thrice told. The blooming, oval face was growing white and pointed, her step was slow and weary about the house. She read aloud to Christopher as he sat, six feet of patient convalescence in the great arm-chair at the parlour window, watching ebb away tediously the last remnant of time in which it was still actually possible for him to avert his worldly ruin. Her voice was monotonous, at times almost harsh, and jarred on her own ears and made her task irksome. The best thing about the effort was, that it was easier than talking, when it seemed that there was nothing she wanted to say except, "Why does not Paul come back?" Neither she nor Christopher took in the meaning of one word that she read, as the young voice went on telling forth the scenes of a play in a plaintive recitative, across which there swept from time to time some brusque and discordant note.

And all this time Aunt Martha was at rest about her, seeing her so quiet, and so willing to be useful. If her cheeks were white, the bloom had gone so gradually that the good lady did not miss it. She had feared some weeks ago that her pretty maid might too well like that Paul, who had since proved himself so fantastic, and so unstable, and so cold; but as the child did not talk of him, nor complain, nor seem to miss him, she concluded that this alarm had been but a fancy of her own. She did not stop to ask herself if she had talked or complained when the joy had been taken away out of her own bygone youth. It was well, thought Miss Martha, that there had been no promise to Elizabeth about giving her girl, as a wife, to the miser's heir. Tobereevil should never blight her as it had blighted her old aunt. She would pray that her niece might be blest with a better lot than that of a heart-broken wife, or a saddened old maid.

Miss Martha had never complained of her lot as an old maid; but she plainly avowed to herself now, when she was on the subject, that the life of a woman such as herself was apt to be sadder than many others. There is a trick of looking back which she finds it difficult to unlearn; and her glances over her shoulder hurt her more sharply than do other people's. A man inclined for retrospect will perhaps see efforts before success, which he would not be willing to cancel even to bring back his youth; a wife knows nothing better worth her mature contemplation than the early years of love which she has toiled through with her husband; a mother will see her children grown so tall that between their smiling faces the landscape of the past shines but in very faint gleams, she is no longer

large enough to see visions over their heads. But for the single woman, said Miss Martha, who ought to have been a wife, there is nothing tall enough nor broad enough to shut out that one bleak point, just fringed by the remnant of the roses of youth, where the first step was taken upon her lonely road.

So the good old lady was very thankful; seeing that May's heart was quite untouched.

OUT AT INTEREST.

When hard-headed Roger North, the prudent merchant, brother of the brilliant Lord Keeper Guilford, came back from his self-imposed exile at the Grand Turk's capital, nothing annoyed or surprised him more than did the importunity of the London goldsmiths. These auriferous persons followed the new-comer about, cap in hand, bobbing their smug wigs in token of civic courtesy, and begged pertinaciously to know where his worship, brother to Mr. Attorney-General, kept his money. The sturdy Turkey merchant was quite disgusted at their inquisitiveness. "Confound you," he answered, in his testy way, "where on earth should I keep it, except in my own house?"

The truth was, that during the score of years or so that Roger had spent at Constantinople, a great change, social as well as financial, had begun to dawn upon the horizon of English life. People, as commerce expanded, were beginning to realise the truth that there is not enough of hard money in the world to accommodate the needs of the buyers and sellers, whose name is legion. We cannot, all of us, carry our penny in our hand when we go to buy a pennyworth. Sometimes, no doubt, it is convenient or necessary to provide oneself with the actual coin, real ringing gold, clinking silver, or resonant copper; but in general it is both pleasanter and more easy to give an order on the till of some one else; to convey the right to a thing rather than the thing itself. The old-established practice which Master North remembered was at least entitled to the praise of simplicity. Every well-to-do merchant had his stout oaken coffer or his heavy iron safe, and to the security of this primitive savings' bank he committed the earnings of a lifetime. There is something almost Arcadian in this mode of investment. To lock up one's gold broad pieces and silver ingots, one's double joes, and Spanish pistoles, and French crowns, and to keep this mass of idle specie until the chance of a good bargain turned up, is precisely what would suggest itself to the mind of an unimaginative man, in love with the wary proverb, "safe bind safe find."

There were inconveniences in the old hoarding system. It was not only that thieves might break in and steal. There was comparatively little risk of that in a solid mercantile mansion, barred, bolted, and watched, nor were the burglars of the period by any means equal to the accomplished artists of our own time, with their plough-diamonds, and gunpowder, and drills of hardened steel. But kings, until a comparatively late epoch, had an ugly knack of asking for benevolences, and loans, and subsidies—the mild names of which did but gild the bitter pill of a requisition peremptory as that of a modern army in wartime—and how could the owner of a well-lined money chest hope to escape the pressure of these royal borrowings and beggings? And then, a long delay might occur before a fresh chance of snapping up a wainload of wool, or a dozen butts of canary, or a freight of Holland napery, came in the trader's way. The heap of inert treasure must often have been as provoking a sight to a bustling alderman as is to a livery-stable keeper that of a row of unemployed horses, "eating their heads off" in the stable. It was troublesome, too, to pay or to receive payment when the parties to the transaction had to be attended by brawny porters with sacks wherein to carry bullion, when scales and weights were in constant request, and there was wrangling over light coin, and squabbling over clipped coin, and two stout apprentices were in waiting, cudgel in hand, to escort their master and his money-bags home through the cut-purses and brawling bullies who beset the dangerous streets.

One solid reason for hoarding money during the long continuance of the elastic period which we call the Middle Ages, consisted in the great difficulty of finding a convenient investment. The very idea of investing capital, familiar enough to the richer citizens of both republican and imperial Rome, had been forgotten. Capital itself was not recognised as the financial Proteus which we now know it to be, capable of assuming all shapes, and of spurring on every kind of industry. In-

deed, the mediæval spirit was hostile to its very existence. People were supposed to live upon their incomes, not to save them. Whatever surplus remained, it was thought that a good man would give to the poor, or to a convent in want of repairs, or to a church that needed a fresh chancel or a peal of bells. A very thrifty person might bury a crock of coin here and there, but the practice was not commendable. As for the money market, it was anathema. There were usury laws, the principle of which was founded on the Mosaic prohibition to exact interest for a loan, and strong discredit attached to those who availed themselves of the legislator's reluctant toleration. The first lenders of money in mediæval Christendom were, of course, Jews, and they were mainly a sort of pawnbrokers, taking in pledge the crown jewels of the monarch, the ruby carcanet of the countess, or the silver hanaps and gilt apostle spoons of his worship the knight. The adventurous capitalist who embarked his means in this traffic was hooted by the street boys, envied by the poor, and despised by the rich. Life for him was full of perils. On any hot August evening, or when the cold and hunger of a mediæval winter had made the half-starved mob wolfish and irritable, a sudden cry might be set up to "rabble the Jews," and then came sack and plunder, a burning house and a scramble for booty, and well for the trembling owner if he and his family escaped with whole bones out of the turmoil. Nor was poor Reuben quite secure from his noblest customers. If a king like John chose to take out his teeth, one by one, until he ransomed his wretched jaw by revealing a secret hoard, or if a baron roasted him into giving a receipt for a debt unpaid, nobody seemed to be very sympathetic with the sufferer. It was thought a sharp way of doing business, a practical joke carried rather far, but that was all.

Presently in Western Europe there appeared rivals for the profits which, in spite of riots and confiscation, the Jews had previously monopolised. The substantial burghers of Ypres and Bruges, the rich traders of Venice and Genoa, began not merely to put out their hard cash at interest, but to lend it with the confidence of men who were not ashamed of the transaction. Indeed, the citizens of the mighty commercial republics of middle-aged Italy, to whom banking was a familiar science, when in London and Paris it was unknown, were strictly following in the steps of their remote forefathers. From a very early date in Roman history the patrician houses of the city had discovered that money might be dealt in as easily, and with perhaps more lucrative results, than any other commodity. The yeoman whose farm could not be tilled without a yoke of oxen to replace those dead of the cattle pest, or driven off by the Samnite raiders, went to Fabius or Claudius for a loan. The petty stall-keeper waited, cap in hand, in the vestibule, while some friendly freedman or humble hanger-on of the great family went in to arrange for an advance from my lord the senator's money chest. It was a matter of course that yeoman and stall-keeper should pay in person as well as in coin for the accommodation. Henceforth they would be numbered among the clients of their illustrious creditor, "boys of the belt," henchmen and retainers, to shout and fight on the Fabian or the Claudian side; to be a body-guard to their patron at stormy election times, and to be ready to back his cause with tongue and cudgel against all Rome. If they were unpunctual with their interest, there were ready means of foreclosure, and a debtor who was hopelessly in arrear went shuddering down, he and his, into the damp dungeons below my lord's mansion, there to suffer from cold and low diet, and perhaps the rack, since the creditor enforced his own jail discipline, and laid down his own rules for the treatment of defaulters. It is not wonderful that under the pressure of such a system as this, combined with the unequal distribution of conquered lands, the Roman nobility became so strong and wealthy, as almost to defy the combination against them of people and emperor.

It is obvious that, in mediæval times, the wheels of the triumphal chariot of Progress were sorely clogged and hampered by the awkward traditions of the time. It was possible to be very rich in kind, and to be at the same moment ludicrously ill provided with coin. The healthy and quick flow of the circulating medium in these latter years is apt to make us oblivious or impatient of the troubles of our ancestors. Silver and gold did not then, as now, go like life-blood through the land, answering every beat of the financial pulse. A "yeoman of Kent, with his yearly rent," has a wealthy sound as we hear his station trolled out in the song; but though fifty hams swung in the wood-smoke of his capacious

chimney, though the sheep on his leas were to be reckoned by hundreds, and fat red oxen lowed in the wet meadows where the brook ran prattling down, even the enviable Kentish yeoman had very little money stowed away in the blue worsted stocking fast locked in the oaken box. He could feed, and did feed, fifty men and women, and could store up grain and wood and oak timber, but his dealings partook more of the nature of barter, than of genuine buying and selling.

To lend money on mortgage under the feudal system was an absurdity. There were no true freeholders left, no horse udallers, no English holders, to declare that they held their lands "under God and the sun," and sturdily to reject the dominion of all over-lords. The great mainspring of the feudal plan was that nothing belonged to anybody, and nobody to himself. There was the king, no Oriental despot, but the chief of a haughty aristocracy, the keystone of the great oligarchical arch, bigger, no doubt, than the biggest of the barons, but regarded more as a doge than as a monarch, the first noble of the ruling nobles of the country. This strange system, which cramped even royalty, and linked all mankind together, had no place for loans on the security of land. How could Issachar or Mordecai, how could Hans the Fleming from Ghent, perform grand sergeanty for the lands of Rushbottom and the broad acres of Cloverley? Oldacre and Kedriggs were held in military tenure, and would King Edward or King Henry deign to receive in the royal leaguer some Genoese trafficker, armed cap-à-pie, to ride to French or Scottish wars, instead of the knight and his stout sons? Could the king's grace accept the green geese, and the new cut rushes, and the horse provender, and gauntlets sewn with silk, from Joseph, son of Solomon, of the Jewry of London, in his yellow cap and dingy gaberdine, as per act of parliament? To lend money on the tangible security of terra firma was a device of a late date.

It is remarkable that the Jewish laws, and those of Mahomet's Koran, have forbidden usury, and yet that the principal money-lenders and money-dealers of five centuries ago were Moors and Jews, the faithful of the synagogue and the believers who left their slippers in the porch of the mosque. Spanish Moslems and scattered Israelites furnished funds for the wars and pageants of South Europe, as Milan and Florence replenished the purse of our own magnificent and expensive Edward the Third. Pedro the Cruel owes much of his bad name to the scrupulosity which made him force his aristocracy to pay their debts. Fratricide and stabber as the Spanish king was, he was beloved by the Spanish populace and middle classes, and, had he been less strict in exacting fair play between his own hidalgoes and their infidel creditors, he might have died in his purple bed at Toledo or Seville, unopposed monarch of all between the mountains and the sea. Nero, too, was a popular sovereign. He, like Robin Hood, did not harm the lowly in station, and to this hour the peasant of Italy has on his tongue the one name of Nero, as the Portuguese vine-dresser can tell you of Don Sebastian, the good king, captive among the miscreant Moors of Africa.

Borrowed money was a costly luxury in the Middle Ages. True, there were statutes which limited the interest, but then, when one man wants money, and another has got it, it is surely easy to elude the letter of the law. To be nailed to the pillory, to have one's ears clipped, and be branded by the hangman, were disagreeable consequences of an advantageous bargain, but then how seldom could these formidable penalties have been enforced? It was for everybody's benefit that things should go on smoothly. High profits were made, in the days of old, by lending money in pledge, but to the present hour the trade has continued to be coldly regarded by the outside world. Pawnbrokers are not popular. A money-lender of the true stamp comes into courts of justice with somewhat of Shylock's ill repute, and when, as sometimes occurs, a young scamp proves too clever even for the trained cunning of the man of cent-per-cent, the world laughs indulgently, as when some astute wizard of the Dark Ages cheated the foul fiend. The man who borrows is sure of more sympathy than he who lends. To foreclose is harsh. Distraint is a process disagreeable to the lookers-on. Still more was this the case a few centuries back. The "great 'oneyers," the gold-compelling exchangers in whose respectable company Sir John Falstaff vowed in future to quaff his decorous flagons of sack, were thought to earn their gains after a fashion that was intrinsically wicked, and men shook their heads as the usurer's sumptuous funeral went by, let the grey friars chant their loudest, and the tapers flare in endless line.

In the reign of Elizabeth a good deal of cash was borrowed on the security of land, and a good many estates changed hands. Many gentlemen of moderate property were dazzled by the reports as to El Dorado, and either joined companies of adventurers eager to colonise some portion of the New World, or fitted out ships to prey upon Spanish commerce. These semi-piratical enterprises demanded ready money, and many broad acres held in fee-simple, with many a grey manor-house nestling among its elms, were melted down in the crucible whence Hope promised to extract the ingots of the wonderful Western Indies. The heavy fines and crushing assessments imposed by Cromwell's major-generals on malignants, compelled numbers of royalists to mortgage estates that they never had the means to redeem, and a large portion of the soil of England passed at that time from the hands of its former proprietors. Almost simultaneously, Britannia herself appeared in the market as a borrower. The first public creditors had very little idea of their own position with respect to the many-headed debtor to whom they lent a few hundred pounds at a time. They trusted the worshipful the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or they obliged his honour the Teller, or they dropped their mite into the ever-ready hand of the Lord High Treasurer, exactly as they would have offered the same accommodation to a great merchant, whose wool had not yet been paid for by his Genoese customers.

The theory of the National Debt, as of the nation's income and its outlay, was formerly a very simple one. The king, out of his own revenues, was supposed to keep up in time of peace the whole machinery of government. It was for him to pay the judges, and such other functionaries, few, indeed, as were directly dependent on the crown, to provide for the civil needs of the country, and to maintain such institutions as were not self-supporting. As these costs and charges gradually increased, parliament had to vote grants in aid of the royal purse, and as the ministers of state, like other persons, often outran the constable, a little friendly help from London citizens was frequently required. But the worthy men who supplied the necessities of the Treasury would have stood aghast at the conception of a funded debt. That these should not get their money back at all, unless by selling their claim, at a fluctuating and capricious rate of value, in open market to somebody else, would have seemed to them little better than flat robbery. Theirs was a running account with the king and his servants, and it was fully understood that the skinners, and drapers, and mercers who lent a thousand pounds should be paid by their august debtor, so soon as the latter should have tided over his temporary embarrassments.

Gradually, as the nation grew richer and more restless, it became customary to lend spare cash and superfluous savings to His Majesty Charles the Second. The lenders must have well understood the personal character of this unprincipled recipient of their hard-earned coin. King Charles, as Macaulay tells us, broke faith with the public creditor, but he was one of those princes whose worst deeds are gently done. He had no idea, for instance, of that blank repudiation which turned the stock of Pennsylvania into waste paper saleable by weight to the butterman. "Spanish deferred" would to him have been as unintelligible as the Cabala, and the various rogueries and rascalities by which the bonds of some South American states have been brought to their present selling price, were as Greek and Hebrew to his uninstructed mind. The problem, so far as he was concerned, was easily solved. The king, as king, borrowed, and he could not pay the principal, nor was the interest always forthcoming. There was the French Duchess of Portsmouth, there was Nell Gwynn, there were other daughters of the horseleech, hustling and struggling with impertunate courtiers for a share of the royal plunder. Whitehall was as bare of ready money as might be expected from a palace where Barbara Palmer and Maria Mancini were in authority over a weak and lavish monarch, and whence the king could draw upon the Exchequer as a country gentleman draws upon his banker. But there was corn in Egypt. There was cash in England, and the newly-established Post Office was a paying concern, and the chimney money brought in its solid half-million with a certainty equal to that of the curses with which cottagers pursued those who gathered it, and already the income of England began to show the strange elasticity which has since kept our heads above water through long wars and fierce domestic discontent.

William of Orange, when he mounted the English throne, must surely have brought with him a complete financial guide, since from his time we date the funding

of our debt. The Dutch were, indeed, our masters in this matter. In Holland there were banks and bankers, when in England our goldsmiths were just beginning to emulate their Amsterdam correspondents by giving a receipt for cash deposited. It was soon found that a goldsmith's receipt, in the absence of the as yet undreamed-of bank-note, would go the round of London traffic, and could conveniently be transferred from hand to hand, without calling into requisition the apparatus by which the sterling value of the current coin of the realm, then unmilled, and therefore sadly liable to cutting, and clipping, and filing, had to be tested. Yet a little while, and a poor Scotchman, learned in foreign finance, would found the Bank of England, and the Old Lady of Threadneedle-street begin a long and prosperous career, during which her bright example has been followed by affiliated daughters in all lands, from the powerful Bank of France to the puny weakling of some striving South Sea colony.

In a piecemeal, hap-hazard way, private persons with something to lend learned that they might invest their money securely in the public debt of any well-reputed state. They must not, it is true, expect repayment from the corporate debtor. But some one else would be willing to buy their rights as regarded the money due from the government. The interest was ready to the day. And, despite all temptations to reap an immediate comfort by dishonesty, some countries, England and Holland at their head, have sturdily maintained their credit at huge self-sacrifice, and have never put off a creditor with vexatious excuses or fraudulent deductions. Good deeds like these shine very far in the naughty world of the money market. Credit is, indeed, like the fabled ermine that dies of shame if there be but a spot to sully its pure white. France was lately the chief of commercial nations on the Continent, yet her financial good name has never quite recovered that ugly little history of the days of the Directory, of the forced circulation of paper, of the national creditor gagged or guillotined, and of assignats so depreciated that eighteen hundred francs in paper money would barely buy a breakfast at a second-rate café on the Boulevards. Austria has been twice bankrupt, and the inexplicable favour with which her securities are regarded in most European exchanges is rather a personal homage of the stock-jobbers (usually an unimaginative race) to the good intentions of the House of Hapsburg, than a certain criterion that the heterogeneous empire is actually solvent.

There are states with public debts with respect to which there is always a pleasing anxiety as to whether the next half-yearly coupon will be paid. Italy, Turkey, Egypt, lead off in this dance, while a few other countries of great undeveloped resources follow them. The question constantly occurs as to whether the party of action will or will not prevent the minister of finance from meeting his engagements; as to the chance that the vizier should muster the ready money for his Christian creditors; or the khedive's man of business have a golden sop to fling to the expectant Cerberus of English and French investers. The result is often akin to that which ensued when a fine old Irish gentleman contrived to remit from Castle Rackrent enough to satisfy the many claimants on the November rents. It was a squeeze and a struggle, but the awkward corner was turned at last, and there was every one's money, punctual to the moment.

Washington Irving, in his Little Britain, speaks of an English optimist who never failed to prove that the public debt with which his country was burdened was, in effect, a great national bulwark and blessing. More natural, perhaps, to an ill-regulated mind was the surprise expressed by the Persian ambassador that the debt should endure when the unexampled park of artillery at Woolwich was competent, if wisely employed, to blow liabilities and creditors into infinite space. But really, when we consider the convenience which Consols afford to the large and timid rentier class, to nervous old gentlewomen, quiet widows, wary trustees, and the like, it almost seems as if, supposing no National Debt to exist for the comfort of these deserving persons, it would be necessary to create one.

It is very nice and pleasant to have within one's grasp a certainty. The humblest fund-holder, who puts his little all into the Three per Cents, has his annual pittance better assured to him than had the longest-headed capitalist of the Whittington times. Dividend-day will bring to him, with machine-like regularity, the moderate fruits of his loan to sea-encompassed Albion. In the mean time, he has the importance that beseems the possessor of a stake in the country, and is the fractional proprietor of a first mortgage on Great Britain and Ireland. But then this unimpeachable

security is attended by its usual shadow, whose name is Low Interest. Three per cent, with the Funds at over ninety, is but poor consideration for the giving up of all one's substance.

Capital is, indeed, a magic wand, that can do nearly everything, but which it needs a skilled hand to manipulate. High interest, in dazzling raiment, like a spangled harlequin, walks the money-market hand in hand with bad security. Many are found, not unnaturally, to run after the glittering impostor, and to take his tinsel and paste jewels for genuine gold and gems. There are several South American republics, certain gold-mining and railway companies, land companies, water companies, the Great Laputa Joint Stock, and the Golconda Extension, which are always flashing their ten or fifteen per cent before the eyes of clergymen with some pounds and more olive branches, of the relicts of Indian colonels, and of the general public. The temptation is cruelly alluring. Never did silvery bait twirl more bewitchingly before a basking pike than does the bribe of two or three extra hundreds a year sparkle before a lady of contracted income, with three or four ambitious daughters, and a brace of sons whom she would like to see transformed into a bishop and a major-general. She must, she really must, as she declares (with the full consent of the chorus of daughters, growing old at Dullington, and eager to exhibit their charms on a wider stage), sell out of those stupid Consols, and give notice to leave the melancholy red-brick house, and "brighten up" with increased means. So she closes her account with Britannia, and becomes the creditor of his highness the Nawab of Needleput, or helps the republic of Santa Impecuniosa to make war on its enemies, domestic and foreign. For a time she gets thumping dividends. But when the insolvent rajah takes his last dram of opium, or the rebels succeed in bringing to drumhead court-martial all the legitimate authorities of the South American commonwealth, then comes a crash, with unpaid coupons, closed shutters, and the ruin of simple investers.

It is not so easy now as it was a hundred years back to find a sure investment, to bring in, say, five per cent on small terms of money. Formerly it was a common practice to buy, on easy terms, a rent-charge on the estate of some nobleman of great landed possessions, just as five hundred years ago it was fashionable to purchase a "corrody" in some abbey, and thenceforth to have beef, and beer, and white bread, a cell, and two yearly suits of clothes, for the residue of one's life. But peers manage matters otherwise now than was the rule when Hogarth etched his grim portraitures of manners. There are still some coroneted spendthrifts, but their nets no longer enclose the exceedingly small fish welcome to their great-great-grandfathers, and who paid their thousand or two of hard guineas for an annual slice of my lord's rents. And though a mortgage on minor properties is often obtainable, small estates are often so wrapped up in sheepskin, and prior claims, and ambiguous settlements, so bemuddled as to their title deeds, and so hazy as to their practical value, that a lender who has nothing to throw away in the law courts does not invariably find it facile to exercise the stringent powers which Themis presumably gives him.

Great gains are often made in a quiet way. Indeed, the people who have the knack of absorbing, not dishonestly, the lion's share in every bargain, are precisely those who would blush to find their doings noised abroad by the blatant trumpet of fame. There are steady, church-going men in England, who turn all that they touch into gold for their private pockets. They wrong no one, but their clear brains, their strong will, and their command of cash, give them the whip-hand of those with whom they deal. In France this is still more the case. If there be one personage whom our lively neighbours regard as the incarnation of respectability, that personage is the notary. And, if there be a choice, the provincial notary is a shade more respectable than even his jauntier brother of Paris. He is a government officer to begin with, and, therefore, his sleek head is surrounded by the nimbus that belonged, till lately, in Gaul, to every bureaucratic functionary. Then his charge is worth money. He might forfeit it if he misbehaved. Were he in debt he must sell it. He keeps it, and is therefore solvent and well-conducted. He is forbidden by law to speculate with his private funds. He sits on the marguilliers' bench at the parish church; he wears spotless black, and a crumpled white cravat of unstarched cambric; he wears gold-rimmed spectacles, with perhaps a green shade as well, and in the button-hole of his brown great-coat there is an inch of that precious red ribbon that a Frenchman loves to look upon. Nothing is more fitting than that those who have savings to

invest, and they are very many in thrifty Gaul, should repose boundless confidence in the notary's advice.

Notaries grow rich, as woodcocks were once supposed to grow fat, by suction. The labourer, whether he works in an office or a field, is worthy of his hire, and it is fair that the scrivener should live by Mammon's altar. But what enriches the notary above ordinary men is the engrossing passion of poor Frenchmen for land. A peasant, who hears of fields in the market, will give as much as a hundred pounds an acre for the freehold of sterile soil out of which it takes the toil of Hercules to make a living. He will work persistently, stubbornly, almost savagely, to wring every sack of potatoes and barrel of coarse wine out of his sandy fields and stony vineyard. To get more out of the land he sacrifices others besides himself. His willing wife slaves and drudges like a London cab-horse, and changes with hideous rapidity from a young to an old woman, over the daily task in all weathers. His children toil more than is good for the straightening of young backs and the shapeliness of tender limbs, in the service of that Moloch of a farm. Up at earliest dawn, busy till dark night, scraping and haggling, pinching and saving, the whole family struggle on, spending as little as they can, making the most possible to them. But, "sic vos non vobis," might be the motto of the French peasantry. These poor folks practise the severest self-denial, and display an almost heroic courage as workers, for the emolument, less of themselves, than of the notary. Of the notary or of "his friend in the city," who found the exorbitant purchase money for the meadows beside the brook, who lent wherewith to buy the cows, and the horse to replace old Quatre-blanes when he fell lame, and who advanced the portion of the married daughter established in the nearest town as a petty shop-keeper. The interest is high, but then Monsieur Deslunettes gently deplores that his invisible client exacts a large return for the cash lent, and money, as the peasant very well knows, is scarce. So Jacques goes home, and works furiously, and lives as hard as he works, under the spur of his fierce land-hunger, and loves the barren soil which he could sell, and well, to-morrow, only that he prefers to toil on, and so much the better for canny, comfortable Monsieur Deslunettes. A very scrupulous person, with a lively imagination, might follow with much curiosity and with occasional consternation, the fortunes of the money he had invested. It would be found now and then to have assumed odd forms. Even loans to governments may do much evil, as well as good. The cash of some benevolent man, whose utmost wrath against the flies would only lead him, like the butcher's daughter described by Corporal Trim, to drive them away, not to kill them, assists somebody to set themselves up in mitrailleuses and sword-bayonets. Harmless Mrs. Grundy's savings go to purchase grapeshot and Greek fire. But fortunately for their own peace of mind investers rarely distract themselves by inquisitive speculations as to what becomes of their money when they have once put it out at interest.

IN THE EVENING.

All day the wind had howled along the lea,
All day the wind had swept across the plain,
All day on rustling grass, and waving trees,
Had fallen "the useful trouble of the rain,"
All day beneath the low-hung dreary sky,
The dripping earth had cowered sullenly.

At last the wind had sobbed itself to rest,
At last to weary calmness sank the storm,
A crimson line gleamed sudden in the west,
Where golden flecks rose wavering into form.
A hushed revival heralded the night,
And with the evening time awoke the light.

The rosy colour flushed the long grey waves;
The rosy colour tinged the mountains' brown;
And where the old church watched the village graves,
Wooed to a passing blush the yew-trees' frown.
Bird, beast, and flower relenting nature knew,
And one pale star rose shimmering in the blue.

So, to a life long crushed in heavy grief,
So, to a path long darkened by despair,
The slow sad hours bring touches of relief,
Whispers of hope, and strength of trustful prayer.
"Tarry His leisure," God of love and might,
And with the evening time there will be light!

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

THE ESCAPES OF A JACOBITE.

Among all those brave and unfortunate men who fled from Culloden, on the defeat of the Pretender's army, not one experienced stranger adventures than the Chevalier de Johnstone.

This gentleman, the son of an Edinburgh merchant, and brother-in-law to Lord Rollo, had been one of the first Lowland gentlemen who joined the prince's standard, and his friend Macdonald, of Scothouse, fell dead at his side at Culloden, at the very moment when the flight became general. Motionless for a time Johnstone remained, then in hot rage discharging his blunderbuss and pistols at the enemy, he turned to fly. He had left his servant and horses on an eminence six hundred

yards behind the Highland left wing, but when he turned to see where they were, they were gone. The enemy was advancing very slowly, yet still redoubling their fire; he must now either run, throw away his life, or surrender. All at once he perceived a horse without a rider, about thirty paces distant. The chevalier advanced and took hold of the bridle, when he found it was held by a cowardly rascal who was lying on the ground feigning death. While the two were wrangling for the horse, young Finlay Cameron, one of Lochiel's officers, came up, and Johnstone begged him to reason with the obstinate fellow. Finlay, a stalwart young Highlander, six feet high, at once presented his pistol, and threatening to blow out the man's brains, made him leave the horse and take to his heels. There was no time to lose, the English were not many minutes off. The chevalier, exhausted with wading through a marsh in his high boots, could not mount his horse. Again Finlay returned, and lifting him like a child, threw him on the animal, which at the same moment he struck. Then wishing his friend good fortune he bounded off, and in a moment was out of sight. Once safe in his stirrups, and out of reach of the dreadful infantry fire, the chevalier began naturally enough to think where he should seek repose. He quickly resolved on making for the castle of Mr. Grant of Rothiemurchus, which is situated in a valley on the banks of the Spey. Johnstone had been a frequent guest there. Grant had taken no part in the rebellion, and his eldest son, a schoolfellow of the chevalier, was in the service of King George. Moreover, when he left Rothiemurchus, Mr. Grant had embraced the young rebel soldier, and said:

"My dear boy, should your affairs take an unfortunate turn, come straight to my house as a hiding-place, and I will answer for your safety with my life."

A hundred paces on the road to Rothiemurchus, Johnstone, however, saw a body of English cavalry barring the way, so he took the road to Inverness. Presently, from an eminence, he observed that the bulk of the Highlanders were throwing themselves in the same direction, so he relinquished his project, struck across the fields, and got as far as possible from the enemy. Making along a footpath by the banks of the river Ness, just after he had heard some brisk firing northward, Johnstone met a Highlander from Inverness, who assured him that the whole road from Culloden to that town was covered with dead bodies, and that the streets were heaped with dead, as the bridge had instantly become blocked. He at once resolved to accompany the Highlander to Fort Augustus, eight leagues off, a place the Pretender's army had partly destroyed some time before. They reached the fort at midnight, obtained, at a public-house, some oaten bread and whisky, and hay for the horse, and slept two or three hours on a bench by the fire, for there were no beds in the place. Before daybreak Johnstone hurried on twelve miles south of the Ness, and from thence to Ruthven, in Badenoch, only two leagues from Rothiemurchus. To his delight the little town had become a rendezvous for the Highlanders, who were eagerly waiting for the return of an aide-de-camp whom Lord George Murray had sent to the prince, wishing to be led to battle. But the terrible message soon came from the Pretender, "that every one must seek means of escape as well as he could." Johnstone then proceeded on to Killihuntly, the mansion of Mr. Gordon, with whom Lord and Lady Ogilvie were then staying. There he took a good meal, after all but fasting for forty hours, and slept eighteen hours without waking. The lady of the house offered him a refuge in the mountains, surrounded by beautiful glens, waterfalls, lakes, and woods; he was to have a lonely hut, with plenty of food and books, and a little flock of seven or eight sheep to look after. The spot was only a mile from the castle, near a trout stream, and she promised to often take a walk in that direction to see her shepherd. The chevalier was tempted by the kind and romantic offer, but resolved to first visit Rothiemurchus, and see if he could find means to embark to France. On arriving there he found the elder Grant had gone to Inverness to pay court to the Duke of Cumberland, but young Grant advised surrender, saying Lord Balmerino had, by his advice, just given himself up. Johnstone also heard, to his indignation, that the cruel duke, after leaving the wounded Highlanders forty hours on the field, had sent detachments to put to death all who had survived the continual rains.

Gordon of Park, and Gordon of Abachie, two of the guests at Rothiemurchus, being bound for Banff, where Rollo, Johnstone's brother-in-law, was inspector of merchant ships, Johnstone resolved to accompany

them, and on the way slept near the mountain of Cairngorm. Fond of the precious stones found here (for one ruby, which cost him only a crown, he had refused fifty guineas), the fugitive, much to the indignation of his friends, spent some hours with the mountain herdsmen looking for topazes. One topaz which he found on this occasion he afterwards presented to the Cardinal de York, in Paris.

Near Banff, a staunch Calvinist place, precautions were necessary. The chevalier changed his Highland dress for that of a stable-man, and in this disguise entered the town and passed through a crowd of some four hundred English soldiers, hardly able to restrain his rage and indignation against them for their cruelties at Culloden. He sought an asylum at the house of Mr. Duff, the provost of Banff, an amiable man with two pretty daughters. The morning after he arrived, as he was putting on his rags, and sitting in an arm-chair with melancholy eyes fixed on the fire, a servant-girl rushed in to say that he was undone, as the court-yard was filled with soldiers come to seize him. Now, as an ex-aide-de-camp of Lord George Murray, general of the rebel army, captain in the Duke of Perth's regiment, and assistant aide-de-camp to Prince Charles himself, his hopes of escaping the scaffold, the axe, and the quartering knife seemed small indeed. Flying to the window, the chevalier therefore took a glimpse at the soldiers, and reseated himself in utter despair, a pistol in either hand ready, to use his own words, "to spring on the soldiers like a lion the moment they should appear." A quarter of an hour of agony, and the door flew open. Johnstone sprang forward to fire; it was only a beautiful girl, the daughter of the host, out of breath, but eager to tell him that the soldiers had merely come in to settle a quarrel by a boxing-match without their officers' knowledge, and that they had now gone. The delighted wanderer may perhaps be forgiven on this occasion for saluting the fair herald, his guardian angel, as he called her, with "a thousand tender kisses."

A few minutes after the family had crowded in to congratulate him, the brother-in-law arrived, cold, troubled, and cautious. He protested friendship, seemed on thorns the whole time, and protested against the possibility of procuring a passage, as all vessels at Banff were strictly searched by the government. He strongly advised an immediate return to the Highlands, bowed himself out, and returned no more. Yet this very man had been saved from joining in the unsuccessful rebellion of 1715 by this same fugitive.

Leaving the kind people in tears, Johnstone returned that night to the castle of Gordon of Park. He now decided to leave the Highlands, where he knew nobody, and try, at all risks, to reach Edinburgh. "I resolved," he says, "to consider myself as a lost man, against whom there were a thousand chances to one that he would end his days on the scaffold, but in favour of whom there was still one chance remaining, and I determined, therefore, to abandon myself wholly to Providence, and trust rather to accident than to any certain resource, and to preserve, on all occasions, the coolness and presence of mind which were absolutely necessary to extricate me from the troublesome encounters to which I should be exposed." His friends did all they could to shake his resolution. They told him the counties he had to traverse were full of fanatic Calvinists, who, led by their ministers, sallied out eager to capture unfortunate gentlemen escaping from the Highlands. They also warned him that he had to cross two arms of the sea, and that, without a passport, the English cavalry patrolling the shore would be sure to apprehend him. But the chevalier was resolute, and set out, disguised in rags, to visit, as his first stage, Gordon of Kildrummy, twelve miles distant. Snubbed by the servants, he there lingered in the kitchen till Gordon could see him privately and procure him a guide. In reaching Cortachie, a village of Lord Ogilvie's, Johnstone was in much danger of meeting the minister of Glenila, who had become notorious for his great zeal in arresting stray rebels. "I had been cautioned about this man," says Johnstone, "but I was not afraid of him, for I always had with me my English pistols loaded and trimmed, one in each breeches-pocket. I desired nothing so much as to fall in with him, being confident that I should have given a good account of him in an engagement with pistols." The chevalier, however, did not meet the "suspecting, barbarous, and cruel man," on whom, soon after, Gordon of Abachie took a savage revenge.

At Cortachie, Johnstone heard that two of his comrades were hiding in a ravine in Glen Prossen, and he found them at the house of a peasant named Samuel. They warned him strongly not to venture south, as the patrol was searching all towns and

villages along the Firth of Tay. Several of their friends had recently been made prisoners. For seventeen days the three gentlemen stayed at Samuel's house, living on bread and oatmeal, and frequently alarmed by the appearance of detachments of English cavalry. By day, Samuel's daughter, who lived at the entrance of the glen, informed them of the movements of the troops; at night, when there was danger, the fugitives hid in the mountains, frequently passing hours in the open air, exposed to dreadful tempests of wind and rain. One evening the faithful sentinel informed them that the troops were unusually active. They had taken Sir James Kinloch, at his castle; and Mr. Ker, an aide-de-camp of Prince Charles, had just been arrested at Forfar. Another party was searching for Lord Ogilvie, and had heard of the retreat in Glen Prossen. It was time to fly, so after holding a council, the three men agreed to return the next morning to the Highlands. That night a strange dream altered the chevalier's resolution. He dreamed he had escaped every danger, and was in Edinburgh quietly relating his escape from the scaffold to Lady Jane Douglas. He awoke early, tranquillised by this dream, and on hearing that his companions had already set out, at once resolved, to the horror and astonishment of Samuel, to make straight for Edinburgh.

Full of apprehension, but still resolute to push south, the chevalier set out on horseback, with Samuel behind him, for the nearest ferry. On entering Forfar, a peculiarly fanatical town, a panic seized Samuel, who lost his senses for the time at a dog beginning to bark, and tried to throw himself from the horse; but the chevalier held him tight, and, with alternate entreaties and menace, forced him to proceed. Once out of Forfar, Samuel regained his courage, and promised better conduct. They then turned the horse loose in a field, threw the saddle and bridle into a draw-well, and walked on towards the ferry. Presently a friend of Samuel's met him and began to ply him with questions. Samuel told him he was going to fetch a calf, which his man was going home with, while he himself went on to Dundee to buy a cow. At the nearest ale-house the two men stopping to drink some beer, the chevalier had to wait and join in the conversation, with the constant fear of being detected. This man, Samuel afterwards told the chevalier, was one of the greatest knaves and cheats in that part of the country, and would have sold a dozen fugitives for the price of a watch.

At the castle of Mr. Graham, of Dunstroon, Johnstone obtained food and shelter till a boat could be hired at Broughty. Hidden in an enclosure among some high broom, the chevalier was to be feasted on beef and claret till a certain hour, when a gardener would pass carrying a sack of corn. This man Johnstone was to follow till he met an old woman, who would guide him to Broughty. The old woman came and led him, in due time, to a hill above Broughty, leaving him while she went to reconnoitre. As the chevalier cowered down in a furrow, eight or ten horsemen passed, who proved to be dragoons sent to search the village below, and warn the boatmen. The old woman returning in an agony of fear, refused, for a long time, to enter the village again. Neither prayers nor money could move the boatmen, but eventually the chevalier tried to coax the two pretty daughters of a Jacobite landlady to row him over. Unable to induce their lovers, the boatmen, to risk their lives, the brave girls at last consented, and at ten o'clock at night the chevalier was landed near St. Andrew's, a place he peculiarly dreaded. Walking all night till his feet were cut to the bone, the miserable man sat down at last by a stream, praying Heaven to take pity on his sufferings, and put an end at once to his wretched existence. He wished he had fallen at Culloden, envied his dead comrades, and already in his fear saw the hangman, knife in hand, waiting for him beside the gibbet. The thought of perishing before a cruel and brutal populace made him, indeed, almost resolve to drown himself in the stream in which he was bathing his feet. Faint and exhausted, he reached St. Andrew's, however, early in the morning, and was stopped in the streets by people who wanted news of the rebels. The chevalier proceeded at once to the house of Mrs. Spence, a cousin of his, who shed a flood of tears at his rashness, for she was a Roman Catholic; her house was peculiarly suspected, and the son of a neighbour had been arrested only the day before. She, however, at once wrote to a tenant of hers, a farmer near the town, to lend the bearer a horse to ride to Wemyss, on business connected with a law-suit, and sent a little girl through byways to guide him out of the town. But the farmer, a staunch Calvinist, refused to profane the Lord's Day by lending the horse, even if Mrs. Spence took the farm away; and new dangers arose round the baffled man.

It was ten miles to Wemyss, and his feet were bleeding and terribly painful. All at once he thought of a gardener named Lillie, who had married a servant of his mother's. She lived at Balfour, half a league from Wemyss. He arrived at the door almost fainting with fatigue, and was warmly welcomed, though Lillie hated what he always called "the accursed race of Stuart." After a sleep of more than twelve hours, Johnstone awoke refreshed, eat heartily, and that night contrived to crawl on to Wemyss, where Lillie introduced him to a fisherman named Salmon, who was to take him over in his boat to Leith.

Salmon, a strong royalist, was at first obdurate. "You deserve, indeed," he cried, "to have your life saved—you who wished to destroy our liberties, abolish our holy religion, and make us all slaves. No; you have come to the wrong man."

In vain the chevalier offered him his last six guineas. Gradually, however, the worthy man softened, and, won by the fugitive's youth, and touched by his misfortunes, consented. Till the boat was ready the chevalier was to hide in a cavern near the sea, celebrated as the scene of one of James the Fourth's adventures with robbers. In the night Johnstone was awoke by horrible and alarming cries, and, imagining that soldiers had surprised him, he leaped up, pistol in hand, resolved to sell his life dearly. The cries, however, only came from the owls and crows the intruder had disturbed. In the morning, making his way to the harbour, the chevalier found that Salmon's wife, having her suspicions roused, had refused to let her husband go to Leith, and, mournful and hopeless, Johnstone returned to his cavern. A Jacobite officer of customs was then induced by Mrs. Lillie to send a sexton named Couselain with the refugee to Dublieside, where he could get a boat. At that place he was sheltered by a Mr. Seton, whose son was also in hiding. Alarmed by the report of a fishwoman that a rebel had been trying to bribe the boatman at Wemyss, Johnstone at last accepted the generous offer of one of the Setons to row him over to Leith. Putting the sexton, who was drunk, at the bottom of the boat, and kicking him whenever he tried to rise, the two young men, in spite of a rough sea, eventually reached Leith in safety.

Fresh dangers, however, still awaited Johnstone. At Leith he sought shelter at the house of his old governess, a Mrs. Blythe, who late in life had married the master of a smuggling coaster. The good woman received him with caresses and tears of joy, and told him that his mother was ill from anxiety for his safety. Mrs. Blythe then showed him hiding-places for contraband goods, where he could secrete himself. The next day the chevalier's father came to see him, and forgiving him his disobedience in prematurely joining the Pretender, locked him in his arms and wept for joy. The next day some English sergeants calling on Mrs. Blythe for billets, caused Johnstone, who eyed them through a hole in the wainscot, infinite terror, but no discovery took place. Soon after this Lady Jane Douglas came to see the young rebel, and begged him to come to her house at Drumsheugh, about half a league from Leith. Arriving at night, in his beggar's dress, a faithful gardener, who was waiting, brought him to Lady Jane. The room destined for him was one that had been long unoccupied, and above the guest chamber. His rags were taken by the gardener and burnt. The refugee was compelled to remain without shoes till eleven at night, that the servants might not hear his step, and at that hour he went down into the garden to take a walk. He seldom saw any one but the gardener, who brought him his meals, but he had plenty of books, and at times, when no servants were about, he ventured into Lady Jane's apartment. A few days after reaching Drumsheugh, Johnstone read in an Edinburgh paper that the Dublieside people had arrested Couselain for helping a rebel to escape, and had burnt his boat. It was now resolved that the chevalier should hide himself in London, but the false news of the probable arrival of another French squadron delayed his purpose. After two months of this quiet life, a servant-maid one day returning from the Edinburgh market brought word that there was a rumour of the Chevalier Johnstone being hid in the house, and that a search might be expected. Trembling at the thought of endangering Lady Jane, Johnstone at once resolved on a plan of escape. Letting a footman into the secret, he was taken into a small enclosure, where hay was making, and was covered under one of the heaps, only a small aperture being left for breathing. There, with a bottle of water and another of wine, the fugitive remained sweltering for eleven hours. When he emerged he was so faint and weak as to be hardly able to walk. Next day Lady Jane's bailiff purchased him a pony for his ride

through England. If the soldiers arrived before he set out he had resolved to jump from the first floor into the garden, climb the wall, and gain the open fields. But nothing could induce him to try the hay any more, so vivid was his horror of the penance he had undergone. Next day his father came to bid him an eternal adieu, and in vain he begged leave to go and embrace his sick mother. The risk was too great.

About eleven at night Johnstone put on the disguise of a country pedlar. He carried a stock of handkerchiefs, folded up his hair under a long black wig, blackened his eyebrows with burnt cork, and boldly set out. At the first public-house at which he stopped an unpleasant surprise awaited him. At the landlady's wish he joined a gentleman at dinner, and on entering the room was confounded at finding Mr. Scott, a young Edinburgh banker, a violent Hanoverian, and who knew him well by sight. Pretending not to recognise him, Mr. Scott, in a moment of absence, uttered his name. Johnstone, taking no notice of this, tried to deceive Scott as to the road he should take, and told him he should sleep at Jedburgh. Scott seemed anxious to make the fugitive believe he did not know him, and this alarmed him more. Setting off quickly after dinner, Johnstone first took the Jedburgh road, and then struck off to Kelso, where he slept at a private house, plunged into the deepest melancholy at having to abandon his native land and all that was dear to him for ever.

Next day he entered England; nor were his perils yet over. Near Stamford (the fourth day from Edinburgh), he overtook some covered waggons full of wounded English soldiers on their way from Culloden to Chelsea Hospital. There were some rebel deserters among these, and one of them, when he saw Johnstone pass, called out:

"See, see, if there is not a man on horseback who resembles our rebel captain, Johnstone, as much as one drop of water resembles another."

The chevalier, who had taken off his large and heavy black wig on account of the heat, and had his hat uncocked, rode on without noticing them to Stamford, and then galloped eight miles further for fear of arrest. On stopping for the night, Johnstone's horse threw itself down, unable to eat or drink; and here an irretrievable misfortune seemed imminent, but in the morning it had quite recovered, and before daybreak Johnstone started again to avoid the dangerous waggons. At sunrise a man, who had the appearance of a highwayman, mounted on a beautiful bay courser, came across the fields to him; but daunted by his determined air, he soon rode off. At the inn at Jockey House an exciseman came and dined with him, and saying he was from Scotland, inquired if the rebels were entirely dispersed. Suspecting he was a spy from Stamford, Johnstone represented himself as a pedlar from Annandale, who felt no interest in the rebellion one way or the other. The rough fellow then asked to see his goods; and Johnstone, pretending his heavier linen had gone to London by sea, produced some handkerchiefs, and, not knowing their value, asked a very moderate price. The exciseman praised his honesty at the expense of Scotch pedlars in general, bought the handkerchiefs, and left delighted with his bargain.

On arriving in London (on the seventh day), Johnstone went to an inn in Greek-street, Soho, where the waiters, as he afterwards heard, were government spies, placed there to watch the Scotch landlord. Taking refuge then, under the name of Leslie, at the house of a friend, Johnstone had still some disagreeable surprises to undergo. One day, hearing a noise in the street, he looked out of window and saw twelve of the Pretender's men on their way to execution at Kennington. Townley, the governor of Carlisle Castle, whose head was placed on Temple Bar, was one of these unfortunate persons. A day or two later, just after he had heard of his mother's death, his landlord, a hairdresser, came to ask him to form a party of pleasure to Tower-hill to see the execution of the Earl of Kilmarnock and Lord Balmerino, but Johnstone excused himself. After a terrible fright from a villanous-looking sweetheart of one of the servants, who kept watching the house, Johnstone received news from Lady Jane Douglas that she was at Harwich, and could secure him a passage for Holland. Though in love at the time, and hardly able to tear himself from London, Johnstone now decided on escape, and set out for Harwich. Passing as a servant, Johnstone had the audacity to accompany the captain of a frigate to Lady Jane's vessel, being on the way nearly recognised by a Scotch midshipman. "I began," he says, "to reckon the minutes which were to elapse before I should be handcuffed and in irons."

On the way to Helvoetsluys some whimsical scenes occurred. Johnstone shared a small cabin with a servant of Sir — Clifton's, with whom he quarrelled incessantly about the accommodation, till the two supposed footmen nearly came to blows. One day, however, Lady Jane asked the baronet's leave to invite to dinner one of her suite who had been with Prince Charles. This was Johnstone, and the baronet's servant, to his great surprise, proved to be an Irish officer of the same opinions.

Even at the Hague Johnstone was not safe, as a sudden order came to arrest and deliver up all Scotch exiles, and Johnstone only escaped by entering himself as a student at Leyden, where no government arrest could take place, except for the crime of assassination. At the end of the year 1746, Johnstone arrived in Paris, soon after accepted an ensign's commission in the French army, and sailed for Cape Breton. He was near Montcalm when he fell in Quebec. In the latter pages of his memoirs the exile laments his hard fate, and concludes with these ominous words:

"Fortune has not proved more propitious to me since my return to France, having continued to persecute me with an invincible obstinacy. There is now every appearance that she will only cease to persecute me at the termination of my existence, which perhaps will be occasioned by the want of the necessaries of life. At my age our lot is not easily susceptible of amelioration."

We fear the poor chevalier, after so many vicissitudes, ended his life after all in poverty and obscurity. Hogarth, though a sturdy Hanoverian, evidently felt some pity for such unfortunate exiles when he introduced into one corner of his Gate of Calais that recumbent figure of the disconsolate, broken-hearted old Scotch soldier reduced to rags and beggary.

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XIII. THE LAW OF EVIDENCE.

The rector had been talking for more than an hour. What had been sarcastically remarked of him in the pulpit, that "he lacked the power of compression," was certainly proved to be true by his attempt at secular narrative. He told the story of George's first quarrel with his father as he had heard it from Sir Geoffry; of the manner in which he had been discarded; of the long period during which he had supported himself; and of the manner in which Sir Geoffry received him on his return. Then Mr. Drage, becoming more circumstantial, repeated what Riley had said, and what Mr. Drew's servant had said about the high words passing between father and son, and the manner in which the old soldier's servant had been ordered to turn his young master from the house. Upon this followed an account of the conversation held between Sir Geoffry and the rector, in which the former tried to justify his proceedings, but was, Mr. Drage thought, finally convinced that he had been in the wrong, and not disinclined to make reparation. Then came Captain Cleethorpe's meeting with George in the street, in which the latter had betrayed his anxiety to avoid recognition. And the narrative concluded with a description of the arrest of the young man with his father's body in his arms.

The rector ceased, and Mr. Moss, who had been sitting for the most part with his eyes closed, swaying his body backwards and forwards, and alternately bringing together and separating the tips of his fingers, now and then making a pencil note, now and then elevating his eyebrows, but never in any way showing the slightest sign of interest or surprise, opened his eyes wide, and brought them to bear on his companion. But as he did not speak the rector took the initiative, and asked him what he thought of it.

"Well," said Mr. Moss, contracting his eyelids and speaking very slowly, "it is a strong case of circumstantial evidence. Young man on the spot, blood on his clothes, the body in his arms; bad feeling known to have existed between him and his father; had been down there once before about the same time in the evening, and knew were to find the old general. All these, neatly pieced together, make a very pretty case for Drew's people, or whoever they may choose to employ. What did he do it for? we should say. What did he get by it? Nothing they would reply. Don't propose to show that—bad tempered young man; done in a fit of rage and out of revenge. I wish he hadn't been down to this place before; the first business, of his having been discarded when he was a boy, happened so long ago that all the particulars would probably have been forgotten, and the mere fact alone preserved. But now we get voices in altercation and

orderings-out; his knowledge of where the old general was to be found at that time of the evening, and all the rest of it. Now this Riley," continued Mr. Moss, referring to his notes, "this man-servant Riley, as I gather from you, will be an unwilling witness against us? I say 'us,' Mr. Drage, because though you were a great friend of the late Sir Geoffry, your sympathies are, I presume, with the young man whom I represent?"

"I should endeavour to keep my sympathies, sir, on the side of justice," said the rector, gravely. "I could not at the first bring myself to believe that a son of my poor friend, no matter what had been his later surroundings, could have committed such a crime. But I confess my sympathies were not with him until I became convinced of his entire innocence."

"Oh," said Mr. Moss, looking across at him with half-closed eyes; "you became convinced of his entire innocence—well—well. And now about Riley, Mr. Drage. He is an Irishman, I believe?"

"He is."

"Was formerly in the army, and has for years been Sir Geoffry's body servant?"

"Exactly. He was passionately attached to his master; but he will not for an instant allow himself to believe that the young man in custody is guilty. He told me he felt that the honour of the family ought to be considered before all things."

"Does Mr. Drew know what evidence this man can give?"

"Oh yes; he was talking of it here last night. He will be called upon to prove that the bitter feeling existed between the father and son."

"And in his endeavour not to prove it, or to prove as little of it as possible, Mr. Riley will make a nice case of it for us," said Mr. Moss, shaking his head. "I shouldn't wonder," he continued, speaking more to himself than to his companion, "if, when Drew got my telegram, he sent up for Netherton Whiffle or Fairland; and this would be just the sort of fellow to fall into their hands. They would turn him inside-out like a glove. Now let me see," he added, referring to his notes, "what else have I to ask about—oh, Mrs. Pickering."

"Well, sir," said the rector, sharply, "what of her?"

"Mrs. Pickering," said Mr. Moss, still at his notes, "is the sister of Miss Rose Pierrepoint, and was housekeeper to, &c. By the way," he said, turning over a leaf, "haven't I something about Mrs. Pickering on the spot at the time? Yes, here it is—'Found senseless outside the window, supposed to be suffering under a concussion of the brain.' That's awkward—Mrs. Pickering would be a most important witness."

"She would indeed," said the rector.

"Yes," said Mr. Moss, peering curiously at him with half-shut eyes, "as you say, she would indeed. By the way, Mr. Drage, you made use of an expression a short time ago which I should like to have a little further explanation upon. You said that your sympathies were with this young man since you have been convinced of his innocence. That is rather a strong phrase, and one which I, as his attorney, am of course glad to hear made use of by a gentleman in your position. Now, will you kindly make me acquainted with your grounds for entertaining this conviction?"

Mr. Drage saw that he was in a dangerous position, and that he must be very careful, or Margaret's secret would be discovered. "I scarcely know," he stammered—"a sort of general—sort of——"

"Exactly," said Mr. Moss. "Now you haven't seen the accused since he was taken into custody, I believe?"

"I have not."

"Then the sources of this conviction cannot have been supplied by him. Very sad thing about this Mrs. Pickering, and concussion of the brain you say. I suppose that she was at once removed to her own room."

"Certainly, so soon as the first excitement was over."

"When did the doctor see her last?"

"Late last night, I believe."

"Have you heard what was the latest report?"

"No, I have not."

"When did you see her last, Mr. Drage?"

"She sent for me last night, just before the doctor's visit."

"Sent for you?" said Mr. Moss. "Oh, then the concussion of the brain was better?"

"Ye-yes," said the rector, growing very hot and uncomfortable.

"Sufficiently better to enable her to talk to you about what had occurred?"

"Yes," said the rector. "I—I think so."

"It is now," said Mr. Moss, quietly looking at his watch, "half-past eleven o'clock; the express for London leaves at twelve twenty-three. Please to tell me, my dear sir, whether I am to return by that express or not?"

"Mr. Moss!" cried the rector.

"Mr. Drage," interrupted the gentleman addressed, "my time is valuable to me and to others; I cannot afford to—pardon the expression—fool it away. You might have spared yourself the whole of the long story you have told me, and all my speculations and inquiries, if you had merely informed me that Mrs. Pickering had talked with you about last night's occurrence. I now ask you plainly, whether I am to be made acquainted with what Mrs. Pickering has told you or not; if I am not to be so informed, I shall throw up the case and return to London immediately."

Mr. Drage was silent for a moment; then he said, "Will it not suffice you to know that she declares George Heriot to be innocent?"

"Not the least in the world," said Mr. Moss, with the nearest approach to petulance which he had yet shown. "The only way of establishing the man's innocence without establishing another's guilt is by proving an alibi, which is impossible in this case, where the man is taken on the spot. I tell you plainly, Mr. Drage, I must have no half-measures now; my proper course would be to go to Mrs. Pickering and endeavour to get her to tell me the story, but as it has already been told to you, and as she is probably too weak to repeat it with safety to herself, I look to you for it."

"And if I decline to tell it?" said the rector.

"If you decline to tell it, I throw up the case, as I have already said, and return to town. It will be for the gentleman who replaces me to tell you what will be the probable result."

"Suppose the information I possess was imparted to me in the strictest confidence," said the rector, after some little deliberation, "what would you say to that?"

"Suppose this innocent man is hanged because his friends decline to come forward and state what they know, what would you say to that?" said Mr. Moss.

"Good Heavens! such a thought is too awful; such a miscarriage of justice could never take place!"

"Ten minutes to twelve, Mr. Drage," said the lawyer, again referring to his watch, "and it will take me twenty minutes drive to the station."

"What am I to do?" cried the rector. "This is a matter of the most vital importance. Of course a secret will be safe with you?"

Mr. Moss smiled quietly. "If you only knew all I know, my dear sir, or had heard half what I have listened to in my life, you would have no doubt about that."

"Yes, but even when you know it, you can make no use of it," said Mr. Drage.

"That is for me to determine," said the lawyer. "Come, sir, five minutes more have gone, and it is time for you to decide."

"Then I will tell you all I know," said the rector. "I am doing it for the best—Heaven grant that I may be right in my judgment."

"No doubt about that," said Mr. Moss, shortly. "Now be as brief and as clear as possible, please."

"This young man, George Heriot," commenced Mr. Drage, "was not even present at the time of Sir Geoffry's death. Mrs. Pickering, who had been strolling in the grounds to get some air, heard Sir Geoffry call out in an unusually high tone of voice, and came as quickly as possible to the window. There she found him struggling with a man whose back was towards her. She saw the old man beaten with heavy blows: she saw him fall lifeless under his assailant's grip, but she was powerless to move or even to call out. Then the man faced round, but seeing her at the window staggered back."

"Did he recognise her?" asked Mr. Moss.

"He did, and she him; the recognition was mutual. He recovered himself in an instant and dashed through the window, flinging her, who strove to stop him, heavily to the ground."

"I see," murmured Mr. Moss, screwing up his eyes and looking into the fire, "this young Heriot must have come up just afterwards. He had been hiding about in the neighbourhood all day, waiting to see his father; knew where to find him alone about that time, and was coming to make his last appeal. That hooks on all right. Now," he continued, looking up at the rector, "you would have told me all this before, of course, if Mrs. Pickering had not some motive for wishing the real ruffian to remain unknown. I am a man of the world, sir, and obliged to speak plainly when we come to such close quarters. Was he her lover?"

"Sir," cried Mr. Drage, "she loathed and despised him."

"Cela n'empêche pas," muttered Mr.

Moss to himself. "Who was this man; father, brother, or what? He must have been some relation?"

"He was her husband," said the rector, faintly.

"The deuce he was!" said Mr. Moss, really surprised. "That looks bad for Pickering. By the way, I heard she was a widow; but it seems that Pickering is not dead."

"The unhappy lady is not a widow," said Mr. Drage. "Her husband is alive; and, as I told you, it was he who committed this fearful crime. But his name is not Pickering."

"That is excessively probable," said Mr. Moss. "Now your dislike to enter into family particulars is quite intelligible; but as I shall have to know this man's name, you may as well tell it me at once. What is it?"

"His name is Vane," said the rector, "Philip Vane."

Mr. Moss started. "Not Philip Vane, who is connected with the Terra del Fuegos mine?" he asked.

"The same," said Mr. Drage.

Mr. Moss gave a long low whistle. "It takes a good deal to surprise me," he remarked, "but I confess you have done it."

"Do you know the man?" asked the rector.

"Very well," cried Mr. Moss; "that is to say, I have met him out at dinner, and have a nodding acquaintance with him. Struck me as being a clever man too, who would be likely to keep out of such a scrape as this. Now, if you please, describe to me the relation between the lady whom we will call Mrs. Pickering and Mr. Vane."

"He married her years ago, when she was an actress," said the rector, with an effort; "he lived upon her salary until he saw his way to better things, when he deserted her, telling her they should never meet again; that their marriage, known to themselves alone, should be forgotten, and that they were each free to follow their own devices. She has never seen him since they parted until last night."

"But she has heard of him, of course," said Mr. Moss—"has heard that he was going to marry the widow of my old friend Bendixen, a woman of large property?"

"She did hear that."

"And did she take no action?"

"None that he was cognisant of."

"Very well answered," said the lawyer. "You have improved immensely, sir, during this examination. So that it was not to see his wife that Vane came down here?"

"He was not, so far as I believe, even conscious of her presence at Wheatcroft," said the rector.

"Then what brought him down here?"

"This is the second time he has been at Wheatcroft. He came before to see Sir Geoffry on business, I believe, but I do not know the details."

"We can get them from Mrs. Pickering," said Mr. Moss. "By her aid I think we shall be able to pull young Heriot out of this fix; but without her, I don't know what we should have done."

"You will depend, then, greatly on Mrs. Pickering's evidence, Mr. Moss?" asked the rector, with some hesitation.

"Greatly! Entirely, so far as I see," said the lawyer.

"Evidence as to what she saw, as to who committed the murder?"

"Undoubtedly! She will be asked who committed it, and every particular about it."

"And suppose she were to refuse to answer?"

"If she refuses to answer she would undoubtedly be committed to prison for contempt of court," said Mr. Moss. "But why on earth should she refuse?"

"Because, however badly she has been treated by her husband, she could not bear to be the means of bringing him to a shameful death."

"I don't want her to be the means of doing anything of the kind," said Mr. Moss; "all I want her to do is, to save my client."

"That is what she is most anxious to do. But I told her it was impossible to prove the innocence of George Heriot, without giving Philip Vane into the hangman's hands."

"Dear me, did you indeed!" said Mr. Moss. "That's a nice round phrase about the hangman's hands; but your tastes, my dear sir, have probably led you to other studies than those of criminal law. Your ideas on that point are apparently very vague."

"Do you mean to say that Mrs. Pickering could prove George Heriot's innocence without incriminating her husband?"

"Certainly not. She must incriminate him. But what you were talking about was, if you recollect, 'the hangman's hands.' Let me put it to you plainly. I intend to call Mrs. Pickering, and by a

series of questions make her give evidence of the circumstances of the murder. I shall ask her who committed it, and she will have to answer truly, giving her husband's name."

"She will never do it, she will never do it!" said the rector. "Is not that giving him up to death?"

"Not at all, my dear sir. This is just the critical point where your knowledge of the law breaks down. If the hue-and-cry is sent after Mr. Philip Vane, and he is taken and brought to justice, the lady whom we call Mrs. Pickering could not be examined for or against him, inasmuch as the wife of an accused person is not a competent witness to be examined for the prosecution or the defence."

"Is that so?" asked the rector.

"That is very much so," said Mr. Moss, "as many of my clients have learned to their great delight. You seem yet a little dazed; now listen to me and I will make it perfectly plain. If you committed a murder and I were accused, your wife could be examined on my behalf, and could give evidence like any ordinary witness, and subject to the same penalties, if she could prove you committed it; but if in consequence of her evidence you were accused, she could not be examined."

"Then George Heriot will be acquitted, and Philip Vane left to find his punishment in the torture of his conscience."

"Then from what I know of Mr. Vane, he will get off very lightly. However, what you mean is this, that he will not suffer at the hands of the law. I should say, certainly not; his wife, so far as I can see at present, is the only witness against him, and her mouth is sealed."

"Thank Heaven for that!" said the rector, faintly.

"I have heard several eminent criminals equally grateful," said Mr. Moss, "though they expressed themselves in different language. I will now go down to the Guildhall, and have a talk with this young man; this conversation with you enables me to take good news to him, but I have a letter in my pocket which I expect he will like better than anything I could say."

"And I will go to Mrs. Pickering," said Mr. Drage, "happy in being able to relieve her mind of that fearful anxiety which I know now besets it. You will not go up till the evening train now, Mr. Moss, and I hope you will dine here before you leave."

Mr. Moss agreed, and the gentlemen separated.

The name and fame of Messrs. Moss and Moss, of Thavies Inn, were known in every assize town in the kingdom; and though Mr. Leopold Moss but rarely left London, where he was always in request, his personal appearance was known to the old superintendent of the county police in charge of the Guildhall at Springside, who, on occasional visits to the Old Bailey, for recognition purposes, had had the famous criminal lawyer pointed out to him. Consequently Mr. Moss, when he asked to see the prisoner who had been brought in on the previous night on a charge of murder, was received with courtesy, and waited upon by the superintendent himself.

"A bad case this, sir," said the old man, as he led the lawyer along the corridor; "looks bad on the face of it, though by no means conclusive in my own mind."

"Glad to hear you say so," said Mr. Moss; "being retained for the defence, I may say I am of the same mind. By the way, have any of your people gone to look at the state of the premises?—I mean inside the grounds, broken paling, bent twig, footmarks, and so on."

"I sent two of my smartest men first thing this morning, sir, and they have been at it ever since, for they have not come back yet."

"Right," said Mr. Moss; "I knew you would not omit anything of that kind. Let me see, when did I see you last?"

"At the C. C. C., last January twelve months."

"When you came to prove former convictions against Thornhill, the bigamist—wasn't it?"

"It was, sir," said the old man. "I am proud to think you should have recollected it. But what a memory you must have!"

"Well, yes," said Mr. Moss, diffidently. "You see, I find it useful occasionally. Oh, this is the place!"

"Yes," said the superintendent, whispering as he unlocked the door, "having known poor Sir Geoffry, and having my own views on the subject, I put him in here instead of one of the ordinary cells."

The room in which Mr. Moss found himself was long and low, the windows were heavily barred, and there was no furniture beyond a chair and a table. George Heriot, who had been resting his head on his arms, roused himself at the noise of the opening door, and stared with astonishment at his

visitor, who advanced and put out his hand to him.

"You do not know me, Mr. Heriot," said the stranger. "I am Mr. Leopold Moss, of the firm of Moss and Moss, solicitors, London, and I have been retained for your defence."

"Retained for my defence! By whom, sir?"

"By a very charming young lady, who instructed me to deliver to you this letter, and by your aunt. Read away, Mr. Heriot, don't mind me. I understand the circumstances, and can wait."

When George Heriot replaced the letter in his pocket, his cheeks were burning. "She at least does not believe in my guilt," he said.

"Of course not; no more do I," said Mr. Moss. "I should not have shaken hands with you, if I had the smallest doubt about it in my own mind. Ours is not too cleanly a profession, and I see a great many odd phases of life; but when I have to do business with a scamp, I always hold it to be enough to attend to his business without shaking hands with him."

"I am afraid you will have a very difficult task before you, Mr. Moss," said the young man. "I was completely dazed last night, and even now I have scarcely recovered the power of thinking. But from the little use I can make of my muddled brain, I perceive that the case is fearfully strong against me."

"It looked so to me at first," said Mr. Moss; "but I have received some information since I came down here, which, though I am anything but a sanguine man, makes me look forward to effecting your release very speedily, I should say on the first, or at worst, the adjourned examination. There can be no pretence for sending the case for trial."

The news was almost too much for George, who, in his excitement, clutched hold nervously of Mr. Moss's arm, and said, "Thank God for that! Can you tell me what has happened, and what you have heard?"

"Not now," said Mr. Moss, kindly, gently pushing him into the chair. "You are not strong enough to hear the story, and I have yet some of the detail to work up before it would be proper for me to tell it to you. But I may say that you will owe your rescue to a lady, and one who, I hope, will very shortly be related to you. I mean Mrs. Pickering."

"Related to me—Mrs. Pickering—I never heard the name!"

"Never heard the name, my good sir! The excitement has indeed upset you. I mean Mrs. Pickering, the housekeeper at Wheatcroft, sister of Rose Pierrepont.

"Rose's sister? What! Madge?

"I shouldn't wonder," said Mr. Moss. "She was an actress once; and on the way in which she plays her part at the examination, rest your chances of speedy release.

The mid-day train, by which the London morning newspapers arrived at Springside, brought down with it three well-dressed, jolly-looking gentlemen, of portly appearance and pleasant manners. They began to smoke and laugh and tell each other stories as the train left Paddington, and they were still in the height of their enjoyment when it arrived at Springside. After they alighted they went to the best hotel, and had an excellent luncheon. Having ordered dinner and bedrooms, they sallied forth into different quarters of the town.

Mr. Leopold Moss, walking up from the Guildhall to the rectory to fulfil his dinner appointment with Mr. Drage, saw one of these gentlemen swaggering jauntily down the other side of the street, and exchanged with him a pleasant salutation.

"Ah," said Mr. Moss to himself, "Gottover here already. Those Mercury people are certainly smart to have sent him down so soon. That must be Streeter, too, talking to the flyman: and Wagg coming down the Wheatcroft road. This is going to be a big case, or at all events these celebrated specials will make it appear so."

And before going to the rectory, Mr. Leopold Moss telegraphed to the firm, that, unless particularly wanted in London, he should make Springside his quarters for the next two or three days.

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CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS,

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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CHARLES DICKENS

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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XXII. MRS. LEE STRUGGLES AGAINST FATE.

NOT only did May become pale and thin, but she began to like lonely walks up and down the damp cloisters, to flit about like a bat in the twilight, and to climb to her old haunt in the belfry in order that she might look out over the land like "Sister Anne," and see if there was "anybody coming." One evening she was leaning over the garden-hedge, peering into the vanishing landscape, and devouring every sad suggestion that the falling night presented to her mind. Suddenly there came two red eyes glaring down the road; not the angry eyes of some terrible demon, as at first they might have been supposed, but only carriage-lamps. Yet they could not have proved a sight more surprising if they had been a couple of unlucky stars jostled out of their place, in consequence of too much crowding upon the milky-way.

They came glaring down the road, and they stopped before the gate of Monasterlea. The darkling landscape swam before May's eyes, as a delightful idea flashed through her mind that this was Paul coming back. She had flown half-way to the gate before joy gave way to another feeling, and she hid behind a rose-bush. Meantime the two red lamps had glared right up the path, and into the open eyes of the cottage, and answering lights had already appeared at the door. The coachman had left his box, and May could see the disgorgement of the carriage. A slow, heavy body rolled from the interior of the coach, and a sound that was not unfamiliar made its way to her ears. Her hopes fell flat and expired as she stood up and stepped forward to receive Mrs. Lee.

"A-a-ah! my beloved daughter!" she cried, as May appeared. It was an odd form of address, but considering the affliction of the visitor, May would not have wondered at, nor objected to, being addressed as "My dear grandmother!"

"I knew it from the first," Mrs. Lee went on, in a choking voice, while she took desperate measures with one hand to save herself from strangulation by unloosing the strings of her weightiest cloak from about her neck, and letting it fall to the ground. "It was not for nothing that I felt like a mother to you at Camlough. Carry up that hamper of wine, my man! A little present, my love, for your aunt. And I have been picking up fresh eggs as I drove along—from the country people—all day; your cook may find them useful."

Miss Martha here arrived on the scene, with Nannie, and Bridget, and torches, and the little commotion of welcome having subsided, the mother was conducted to the embraces of her son. And then, after going through several ceremonies of joy and benediction, she was again taken possession of by May, and conducted to a guest chamber, to remove the traces of her travel. Having settled her front and her turban, she sank at last into a large arm-chair, and prepared further to unburden her soul of the purpose with which it was charged.

"Ah! my dear daughter! Such a daughter as never was welcomed before to a mother's longing heart. Sit down at my feet, my pretty one, and let us talk at our leisure about our plans."

But May had no plans, and she preferred

standing erect. Yet she declared herself willing to converse with Mrs. Lee.

"Nay, nay, my dear," said that lady, "why so coy? You must think me very blind not to have seen what was going on between you and Christopher."

"Nothing ever went on, Mrs. Lee. You, of all others, ought to know that well."

"My dear girl," said Mrs. Lee, taking her hands, and trying to draw her down for a kiss, "do you mean to say that my poor boy did not propose to you?"

"I thought he had forgotten it," said May, aghast. "How could you find it out? He was mad when he did it, and he thought I was Katherine."

"Thought you were Katherine! Ha, ha! Excuse me, my dear, for I know you have cause to be jealous, and to stand on your dignity. But you need not with me, my dear, his poor anxious old mother. It is long since he gave up Miss Archbold, and fixed his affections upon you. Excuse me, for I know your devotion to him since, which has saved his precious life; but it was his love for you which threw him into this fever."

"Did he tell you so?" asked May, knitting her brows.

"Well, no," said Mrs. Lee, with a spasm of fear that she was going too far. "But do you think an anxious mother cannot read the heart of her son?"

"Not at such a distance I should think, and without the help of a telescope," said May, with a little grim mirth.

"Ah, you are laughing at me," said Mrs. Lee, and her tears began to descend. "And I had so buoyed myself up with the hope that you, at least, would be merciful and kind to my dear son; so different from that other woman; that his future would be a sacred affair to you. And now—and now——" Mrs. Lee wept.

"Pray don't cry, Mrs. Lee," said May, with a conscience-stricken feeling that she was behaving very inhospitably in thus distressing her tired guest. "I am sorry, indeed, to disappoint you, and I see you have deceived yourself in some strange way. I have great pity for your son; but you know I could not marry him for that reason; especially as he does not even want me."

"There it is! There it is!" cried Mrs. Lee. "I knew it was only proper feeling that was working your little heart. And can you really think that he does not wish to marry you? If you read his letter, his last letter, that heart-broken letter——"

May's temper and sense of humour both began to get lively.

"Mrs. Lee," she said, "I know it is very important that your son should be married before Friday."

"You do, you do!" cried Mrs. Lee, with increasing emotion. "My own frank, devoted girl! How bravely she comes to the point! I almost feared to remind her of it, but I need not have doubted her. She will throw herself into the breach. She will save us from ruin; be mistress of a manly heart and twenty thousand pounds a year!"

"But, Mrs. Lee——"

"I know that she would do it, and, as she says, it must be done before next Friday. I thought about all this when I brought a parson with me in the coach. He did not object to the trip, on account of the shooting. I dropped him at a farm-house about a mile away. A most respectable clergyman, but with his time not fully occupied."

May could bear no more just at present. Her cheeks burned with indignation, and the corners of her mouth were twitching with laughter, yet she was so sorry all the while for mother and son, that she could not either laugh or fly in a passion with any comfort. Fortunately, Miss Martha came in search of her guest, allowing May to make her escape. And she heard nothing more about matrimony for that one night at least.

On the next day, however, it was plain that a campaign had been entered on by Mrs. Lee, which she meant to carry on with vigour till the hands of the clock should point to midnight on Friday. Christopher in his meekness and weakness had been talked to by his mother, and looked wistfully at May, and even ventured to say to her that though he could not have dared to originate the proposal, seeing all that had passed, still, that she should never have reason to repent it, if she could bring herself to be so generous as to marry him. May found it hard to be thus punished a second time for a second of Katherine's sins. It was not hard to silence poor Christopher, but Mrs. Lee would not be put down; and the hardest part was that she had in some sort talked over Miss Martha to her side.

"Only think of what two young people could do with twenty thousand a year," she said. "And two such young people as they are, my dear ma'am. So well matched in youth, in appearance, in tastes! It is maddening to think of such a crisis coming near, when all might turn out so happily in one hour by the joining of their two dear hands."

Aunt Martha listened, and Aunt Martha

was fluttered. There was a great deal of truth in what Mrs. Lee was saying. She was smarting a little from Paul's indifference to her niece, and he was gone away and had disappointed her. She had no longer his interests to provide for. Neither did that stray duke, whose interference had once appeared so inevitable, seem to be on visiting terms at Camlough after all. And it might be a long time, indeed, before another fine young man with twenty thousand a year should come courting pretty May at Monasterlea. By-and-bye, Aunt Martha faltered forth a conditional consent to Mrs. Lee's proposed plan. She would talk to her niece, and if the child could be persuaded, the marriage should take place.

May perceived this yielding of her aunt with dismay and resentment, and the ceremony of the talking over produced no satisfactory results. Miss Martha, on this occasion, found her sitting in the furthest corner of her room under the sloping wall, with her hands locked in her lap, and her mouth tightened up into a straight line of determination.

"I know what you are coming to say, Aunt Martha," drawing still further back into her corner, but speaking loud and plain. "I never expected that you would go over to the enemy."

"The enemy, my darling? Indeed, there is no enemy. I am just going to ask you to think seriously of the thing. The young man is good and amiable, and will make an excellent husband. My May would be a lady, and could go and come when and where she liked."

"I don't want to go, nor to come," said May, "only to stay where I am." And she locked her feet together, as if in that identical corner she had resolved to live and die.

"I should no longer have any anxiety about providing for your future."

"Never mind that, Aunty. I can turn milkmaid any day."

"You shall not need; but what I mean to say is, that a good husband is a treasure not to be met with every week."

"But I don't want a good husband every week; nor any week; nor a bad one either. How nicely you have done without one yourself, Aunt Martha!"

"Oh, of course, if you desire to be an old maid," said Miss Martha.

"I do not desire it. I desire nothing of the kind. But I had rather put up with it, as you have done, Aunty, than sell myself, for even twenty thousand pounds a year."

"My dear, you never spoke to me in that way before. Nobody ever said yet that I 'put up with it.' I have always——"

"Now, now, Aunty," said May, springing from her corner at last, and putting her arms round the old lady's neck, "you know very well that you put up with it because you could not marry the person you liked; and I love you for doing it, and I mean to do the same."

"Do the same!" echoed Miss Martha, in astonishment. And then she saw that May's eyes were wet with tears.

"The very same," said May, laughing. "And you must promise to say nothing more to me about this matter; but try to get Mrs. Lee to take her poor son away. It is quite time that we two old maids had this house to ourselves again."

On Friday morning, as May walked down the garden path, a gentleman met her coming towards the house. He was dressed like a clergyman, but carried a gun. He took off his hat and introduced himself as a friend of Mrs. Lee, who had come by appointment to see that lady. May bade him welcome, and accompanied him to the house, knowing very well that here was the parson come to marry her. She conducted him to the parlour where Christopher was sitting, and did not think it advisable to awake Mrs. Lee, who had slept longer than usual, in consequence of much trouble and excitement, and many wakeful nights.

What passed between Christopher and the parson has never been recorded. After they had been for some time shut up together, May saw, from an upper window, the two men walking side by side down the path to the gate. Christopher was leaning on his stick, and walked slowly, and looked downcast but dignified. The parson was nodding his head and talking briskly, and as he went away shook hands a second time with Christopher over the gate. Then Mr. Lee returned slowly to the house.

Soon afterwards Mrs. Lee came to light, and held private converse with her son for half an hour. There were sounds of weeping from the parlour during this time, and at last Christopher led back his mother to the door of her own room, where she returned to bed, and would take comfort from no one. Miss Martha sat with Christopher the rest of the day, while May kept aloof, feeling like a culprit. In spite of all she knew to the contrary, it seemed as if she must be to blame for Christopher's mishap.

Towards evening she ventured to show her face in the parlour. Aunt Martha had left Mr. Lee to take a nap in his chair, but the young man was wide awake when May came stealing in. She brought him a vase of the latest flowers, including the very last rose of summer, as a needless peace-offering, and a vain little temptation to make him glad. Christopher was not at war with her, but he could not be glad. He smiled over the flowers and thanked her for her trouble; and then he had a little more to say.

"I am sorry and ashamed of all the trouble you have had with us," he said. "It was a monstrous thing to torment you as my mother and I have done. I beg of you to forgive and forget what has passed. We shall leave you to-morrow, full of gratitude for all the kindness you have shown to a sick man; and by-and-bye I shall set to work and be a new creature. Will you give me your hand in token that we are friends?"

"Right willingly," said May, giving her hand and feeling sorely distressed. Christopher's eyes filled with tears, and he raised her fingers to his lips. While she thus stood beside him and he kissed her hand, there was a witness of this scene of forgiveness and farewell. The leaves fluttered at the window as a shadow came among them, and then quickly disappeared. Christopher saw nothing, for his face was turned from the window; but May had glanced up quickly and seen—Paul.

She snatched her hand from Christopher with a little cry. "What is it?" he said, fearing he had offended her; but she said, "Oh, nothing!" and muttered something about the window, so that he thought she had seen a strolling beggar; but May was gone from the room before he could make up his mind. She nearly ran down Bridget, who was bringing in the tea-tray and the candles, and then stopped in the hall, and assured herself that she ought to go to her own room. What, hide in her own room when Paul was outside, hurrying away, never to come back any more! He had come at an unlucky moment, and had seen what might make him think that he need not come again. She wrung her hands in an agony of indecision, and finally flew down the passage to her own room.

But at the end of the passage there was an open door through which the moon was shining, and just bard by there lay on a bench a white apron belonging to Bridget, and a large woollen shawl of vivid colours, which the handmaiden was wont to wrap round her head and shoulders. May seeing these, a merry idea sparkled up through all the troubles in her mischievous head. She tied on the apron, and threw the shawl over her head, wrapping it well about her face. She turned up her long dress and made the apron very conspicuous. Then she went out of the door, and set off running across the fields.

Paul, meanwhile, walking along the meadow path, stopped at the stile to take a last look at the moonlit ruins, and the cottage with the red lights in the windows, and thus caught sight of (apparently) Bridget coming running to overtake him, with her white apron flying, and her head and shoulders swathed up in the identical shawl which he, in his character of pedlar, had bestowed on her. May was at that moment thinking also of the pedlar, and thinking delightedly that she was going to trick Paul as cleverly as Paul had once tricked her.

"Oh, musha, sir!" she said, as she stopped, panting, beside him, and mimicking Bridget's voice, "but ye do step out fast an' sthrong! long life to yer honor! Sure the breath is gone from me wid the runnin'. An' the misthress waitin' the tay on yer honor; an' begs wid her compliments that ye will come back at wanst, sir, an' not go 'way in sich a hurry."

Paul's heart beat fast, and she could see him flush up in the moonlight. It seemed to him that this was adding insult to injury.

"I am much obliged to your mistress," he said, "but I could not think of intruding myself on the family at such a time."

"Thin sich a *what* time, yer honor?"

"Why at a time when you are preparing for a wedding," said Paul. "You will please take back my good wishes and farewell."

"Oh, but plase yer honor, the misthress'll not be satisfied wid that for an answer. An' the weddin's not to be till—to-morrow," said May, with a mischievous delight in tormenting him a little longer. "An' we're not so busy as ye think. She wants to see yersel'. She's *despert* anxious to see you;" emphasising Bridget's favourite word.

"So the wedding is to be to-morrow, is it? Well, tell your mistress I congratulate the bride; and I certainly shall write to Miss Mourne—the elder lady, I mean—before I sail from the country."

"An' ye won't come back, sir?" said May, feeling blankly that she had gone too far in humouring his fancy about the wedding.

"No, my good girl; and I am sorry for giving you so much trouble. You will take this little present from me to buy you a new dress."

May was dazed with her utter failure. She had just enough presence of mind to know that she ought to keep up the character she had assumed; she must accept the money, and Bridget should be the richer for it. But May quite forgot that though she had borrowed Bridget's shawl, Bridget's hands were at home, and she held out a hand which was unmistakably her own, and which Paul knew as well as he knew her face. How could brown buxom Bridget give forth such a bit of snow into the moonlight?

"What is this? May!" cried Paul, looking down at the little hand, as if it had been a thing not of flesh and blood.

"There, I am caught!" said May, throwing back the shawl from her face. "And I could cry for vexation, only it is so ridiculous."

"What does it mean?" asked Paul.

"It means that Bridget wanted to thank the pedlar for her shawl," said May, dropping a curtsy. "That is all it means. An' now, plase, sir, shall Bridget take back your message to her misthress?"

"I feel that I ought to be highly flattered by this mark of attention from Mr. Lee's bride," said Paul, with some scorn in his face, as he drew back a little, as if in disgust, from the very lovely figure which the moonlight shone upon.

"Don't call hard names if you please," said May, "I am not accustomed to it. I never was called a bride before in my life."

"This is strange conduct," said Paul, sternly, "for a lady who is going to be married to-morrow."

"It would be a little odd in that case," said May.

"Would be? Why, do you forget that you have just told me that the wedding is to be to-morrow?"

"So it is," said May, plucking the thistle-down that grew by the stile. "Barney Fagan and Judy Lynch are to be married in the morning. Tenants of Aunt Martha's. Bridget is to be bride's-maid."

"Pshaw!" said Paul, impatiently, with a stamp of his foot. "Have not I spoken with the parson who was brought here especially from Dublin to perform a marriage at Monasterlea?"

"Have you?" said May. "How simple you are, both you and he. It is only in romances that one hears of a wedding without the consent of the bride."

"Then you are only trifling with this poor man and his wonderful fortune—just as you are trying to make a fool of me!"

The moonlight gleamed vividly a moment on a little white wrist and hand, as May tossed up her handful of thistle-down into the air; and then she turned suddenly round upon Paul. For one moment she looked the image of womanly indignation, and opened her lips to speak her mind in good earnest; but suddenly her mood changed. Without saying a word she threw Bridget's shawl once more over her head, dropped a prim curtsy to her unmanageable lover, and set off walking as fast as she could towards the house.

Upon this Paul regained his senses immediately, and found that he was not at all prepared to turn about and continue his way towards Australia, without further explanation of the state of affairs at Monasterlea. His pain had made him rude, and at least he could not go without offering an apology. He started off to follow May, and, with a few swift strides, came to her side.

"May!" he cried fervently at her ear; but May tripped on, and did not appear to have heard any one speaking just at her back.

"May!" he cried again. "Speak to me! You must not leave me in this way. You must give me some explanation of the things I have seen and the stories I have heard."

"She was spakin' to yer honor long enough," said May, talking over her shoulder as she still sped along. "As for me, I'm only Bridget, an' I'm goin' home wid my message."

"For Heaven's sake stop a moment—*Bridget!*" cried Paul.

"What have ye got to say to Bridget?" she said, slackening her pace a little.

"I want you to tell me something about your young mistress. Will you swear that she is not engaged to marry Mr. Christopher Lee?"

"By my feth I will!"

"That she never was engaged to him?"

"By my troth I will!"

"That she does not care about him, except as a friend?"

"I never swore so much in all my life before; but I'll swear that too. Is there any more?"

"That he did not ask her to marry him?"

"I couldn't swear that."

"Well, then, will you swear that she refused him?"

"Ay, will I!"

"And why was the parson brought from Dublin to marry them?"

"Och! sure that was but the crazy fancy of a poor mother in throuble."

"One word more, Bridget. Why did your mistress refuse to marry this rich man?"

"Thin that's a saycret of her own. If ye want to know that ye must ax hersel'."

"May!"

"Paul!"

"For Heaven's sake stop, and speak to me in earnest for a moment. Is this all true that Bridget has been swearing?"

"I would not keep a servant who would swear against the truth, Mr. Finiston."

"Will you answer me one more question, as May, not as Bridget? Why have you refused to marry Mr. Lee?"

"For a great many reasons. A great many more than I have time to tell you now. The tea will be waiting, and I must give an account of myself."

"The tea waiting! I declare it shall wait until I hear my sentence from your lips, May! Do you remember all I said that last evening four weeks ago?"

"Yes; I remember it. You were very uncivil."

"I was mad. I am an unhappy person to have anything to do with. I am of a dangerous nature, uncertain, and moody."

"Do you think I am so stupid as not to have found out all that long ago?"

"And in spite of all that, May, will you marry me?"

"I will, Paul. That is, if you would like it very much."

"Like it! Oh my darling!"

"But the tea, Paul! The tea will be cold. And the whole house will be turning out with lanterns to look for me."

Nevertheless the tea went on cooling for at least ten minutes longer; and when May slipped in at last to take her seat behind the teapot she was rebuked as she deserved by her Aunt Martha.

"I met a friend, Aunty," she said; "and he is coming in to see you."

"A friend!" said Miss Martha; and then Paul appeared.

UNDER THE SEA.

The last gentleman who, in the interests of this periodical, made a pilgrimage under the sea, was lowered down in a diving-bell from the Admiralty Pier Works at Dover, was dressed in a costume apparently modelled on that of the wicked smuggler in a transpontine drama, had acute pains in his ears and head, and seems to have seen nothing but the lumps of chalk and flint lying side by side at the bottom of the Channel. Things are very much improved since then. We go under the sea, down a broad flight of stairs, dressed with our usual elegant simplicity, and without the smallest trouble in our head or ears. Moreover, on arriving at our destination, instead of being relegated to the company of a stupid diver, we find a learned and enthusiastic guide awaiting us; and, instead of lumps of flint and chalk, we see around us all kinds of fish and other marine animals brought together with great difficulty, watched over, nourished, and preserved with unwearied care, and affording to the natural history student greater opportunity for study and inspection than he has ever previously met with. For we are under the sea at the Crystal Palace Aquarium, and our companion is Mr. W. A. Lloyd, its excellent superintendent.

It is curious to note the difference which has taken place in the principles on which aquaria are constructed since the erection of the Marine Aqua-Vivarium, as it was called, in the Zoological Gardens of the Regent's Park, a description of which was published in Household Words nearly eighteen years ago. Truth to tell, the knowledge of the subject was then very limited; it was known that marine and fresh-water animals could be kept alive in unchanged sea or river water by the action of growing vegetation, but the vegetation was expected to do too much, and accordingly in those days aquaria were kept in light and warm places, almost, in fact, under the condition of conservatories, while the tanks themselves containing the collection were glazed on all sides so as to admit as much light as possible. Moreover, no care was taken to observe the proportions of the tanks, and hence the water in them was piled up in tall masses instead of being spread out in shallow ones, so as to absorb as much atmospheric air as possible by surface contact. The result was that the collections were kept too warm, and the water not having in its too high temperature power to contain a sufficiency of oxygen, the animals died rapidly. An attempt was made to increase the amount of oxygen by unduly stimulating the vegetation under excessive light, but the consequence was that the plant life grew too luxuriantly and choked up everything; the water became green and dirty, and quite unfit for the maintenance of animals. This being the

result generally arrived at, both in public institutions and private houses, it is not to be wondered at that the aquarium mania, which began in 1853, died out in England, after feebly fighting for existence during nine years.

Not so in Paris, however, where, in 1860 and 1861, at the Jardin d'Acclimatization, Mr. Lloyd, our present curator, introduced aquarium keeping in a much better manner. He lessened the quantity of glass in every tank from four pieces to one piece, and decreased the amount of light and heat, thereby at once tending to keep the vegetation to its proper service, that of being an auxiliary only for the supply of oxygen, or rather for the decomposition of the carbonic acid gas evolved by the animals, the carbon being absorbed by the plants, and the oxygen set free for the animals' use. Further, by keeping the sea and fresh water in perpetual motion day and night in streams, Mr. Lloyd was enabled to infinitely increase the oxygenating surfaces exposed to the air; and he also hit upon a better way of introducing the vegetation which, at that time, was put in either growing on stones, or rooted in shingle or sand. This last discovery Mr. Lloyd shall tell in his own words. "One day I saw bright bubbles of air rising from a corner of a drinking glass in a bird-cage, the corner, difficult to get at, being left uncleaned. The sun was shining on the glass where the bubbles were rising, and I suspected them to be oxygen gas, so scraping away a little of the green stuff from the glass and examining it under a microscope, I found it was spontaneously growing vegetation. Henceforward, therefore, beginning in Paris, I depended only on the self-coming plants, the germs of which abound in all waters, and need only exposure to light to make the plants themselves appear." These, and other improvements, were developed in an aquarium built under Mr. Lloyd's superintendence by the Zoological Society at Hamburg, and opened under his management in 1864, and which, at the time of its construction, was the best specimen of its class in Europe, and still remains the best one on the Continent. Neither in size nor arrangement, however, is it to be compared to the establishment at Sydenham.

The aquarium is at the northern, or, as it is more generally called, at the "tropical" end of the Crystal Palace, on a portion of the site ravaged by the fire of 1866, and occupying ground nearly four hundred feet in length and seventy feet in breadth. Besides those portions open to the inspection of the public, there are a workroom, a steam-engine and boiler-room, a receptacle for the heating apparatus, two storerooms, an attendants' gallery running from end to end, and an office. One side of the principal gallery is divided into eighteen large tanks; through the glazed side of each you look into a kind of rocky cavern, alive with monsters of the deep, whose learned names you can read on a ledge before you, but with whose personal appearance you have hitherto only been familiar in connexion with fresh salad or melted butter. Here, in separate compartments, are our old friends the sole and the plaice; the whiting, whose normal state it does *not* appear to be to have his tail in his mouth; the lobsters, who do not seem quite so ill at ease as when they are wedged together on a corner of the fishmonger's slab; the crawfish, hobbling up and down his sanded floor, so like the pantaloon whom we saw in last night's pantomime; the filmy shrimp, reminiscent of Gravesend, where he is spoken of without his "h," and devoured in large quantities with tea; and the greedy prawn. There are about twenty thousand gallons of salt water contained in these tanks, while the large reservoir running from end to end of the saloon holds eighty thousand gallons more. The sea-water in the tanks, which is maintained at a uniform temperature of from fifty to sixty degrees, is kept in good order by being in constant circulation, being pumped into day and night from the large reservoir below. A double set of machinery; two boilers, each of four horse power, two steam-engines, each of three horse power, and two of Forbes's patent pumps; is devoted to effecting this circulation, one of each article being at work while the other is in reserve. This sea-water, which needs thus never to be changed, year after year, and which weighs a million pounds, was brought up by the Brighton Railway at merely nominal rates of cost, through the kindness of the general manager, Mr. Knight. The pipes through which the water passes are made of vulcanite or hard india-rubber, incorrodible by sea-water deposit, and with the water forced from the main pipe into all these tanks through jets is mixed a great quantity of air, which, in a cone-like cloud of minute bubbles, can be seen forcing its way to the bottom, and thus aërating the tank as the body of the sea is aërated by the rush of the passing waves. It is observable, also, that the ventilation everywhere is remarkably good, and that in the entire series of sixty tanks (for in addition to those we

have named there are upwards of forty others, in twenty of which, containing small specimens, the view is through the surface of the water as well as through the front glasses, while the other twenty-one are reserve receptacles) there is not one which cannot be brought, when needed, into free contact with the open air.

A very cursory inspection will show that the expectations of the success of this aquarium are based upon the fact that in its construction the useful and the practical have been studied, rather than the ridiculous theatrical decoration with which its predecessors have been disfigured. In most of the continental aquaria (notably in the aquarium at Berlin, which cost forty-five thousand pounds, and which may be cited as a splendid specimen of costly wrong-doing), money has been lavishly expended upon decoration of rockwork, which is placed outside the tanks, with the view of giving the spectators the idea that they are in a submarine grotto. This is an expensive attempt at deception, which deceives no one, and is utterly useless. That rockwork is essential for the comfort of the animals we grant, but then it must be placed, as at the Crystal Palace, inside the tank. Errors such as this are seldom, if ever, committed by any educated naturalist, but spring from the fertile brain of the scenic artist or theatrical property-man; and hence, when they exist, it may be judged that they never coexist with the right spirit which contrives and conducts what is purely a natural history exhibition with permanent success.

It is now, however, time more closely to inspect the inhabitants of the tanks, and our first halt is made before number seventeen, at the far end, where are the prawns. At the moment of our arrival but few of these gentry seemed to be about, and we saw nothing but half a dozen prawns walking with great dignity over the shingle and rocks at the bottom of the tank, as though enjoying a constitutional. The next instant a shower of food, consisting of chopped mussel, was poured into the tank, and not merely did the promenading prawns relax their dignity and strike upwards in search of their dinner, but the whole scene changed in an instant. From the rocks to which they had been clinging, or under which they had been concealing, came prawns in scores, all hunting for their food; now tussling with each other for choice morsels, now swimming away with the prize which they have secured, and which, in many cases, is so big in comparison with their own size, that they are compelled to drop it before they reach the spot were they had hoped to devour it in safety. From prawns to lobsters is a natural step, and pausing before the tank where these last-named specimens are contained, our guide informs us that they are on the whole a maligned race, being accredited with an amount of bad temper, and an inclination for free-fighting, which they certainly do not possess. One noticeable point in the physical organisation of the lobster is, that should one of its legs become injured, the lobster immediately drops it off, the point of severance being at the last joint close to the body; no bleeding ensues, for a skin immediately forms over the stump, and a new limb then begins to grow. It will be strange, perhaps, to the uninitiated to learn that the lobster casts its shell as the snake casts its skin or the bird moults its feathers. When the fish becomes aware of this approaching event —conscious that during the time of its indisposition it will be utterly helpless in the event of attack, in its soft state, when other animals can easily tear it up as food— it establishes itself beneath a shelving rock, with a rock on either side, and burrowing into a hole, throws up the sand and shingle which it has thus displaced, as a kind of earthwork in front of it. When the shell is finally cast, the lobster is in a state of exhaustion, but remaining perfectly quiet its vigour returns, and in about three days the new shell has become hard and strong enough to enable its wearer to pursue its ordinary life. In this same tank is the great spiny lobster or crawfish, differing from its fellows in the fact that its limbs are single-clawed, and that its external antennæ are furnished with sharp bristling points, enabling it to repel any troublesome attack, such attacks being always made from the promptings of hunger, never from spite, as with man.

In other tanks are specimens of the conger-eel and the fresh-water eel, the latter living perfectly well in sea-water, both hiding by day and searching for their food at night; soles and flounders swimming gracefully, the former with a snake-like, undulating motion; cod, of which there are eight members of its family present, all of them feeding well and growing fast, including whiting. Of the labridæ, so-called because of their protusile lips (or wrasses in their English name), there are several specimens living and flourishing. The male

of Labrus mixtus, the blue-striped wrasse, is the most gorgeous fish of the British seas: its body is marked with longitudinal bands of most brilliant blue on a ground of greenish brown bronze, while the fins are of deep yellow bordered with blue. The female is of a light red colour, with black and white spots on the back. As these beauties in the male cannot be well discerned in the ordinary way, they have been accommodated with a special tank, swimming in which they can be looked down upon obliquely from above. In neighbouring tanks are the dragonet, the sharp spines on whose gill-covers can inflict wounds when he is handled, and the brilliantly glowing green of the eyes of which, combined with its gorgeous hues generally, especially in the male, makes it deserve its English epithet of gemmeous dragonet. The gobies and blennies, which are so tame that they will suffer themselves to be taken up in the hand, and will sometimes feed there, are also present. There, too, is the sea-water stickle-back, which builds itself a regular nest of seaweed sewn together with threads exuded from its body (as spiders exude the materials for their webs), the greedy bullhead, the gurnard, with elegant jay-like winged pectoral fins, and the poisonous weever. Our guide has reserved to the last the real lions of the aquarium, the octopus and the sea anemones.

The octopus has lately enjoyed a vast amount of popularity. He has been declared to be the pieuvre, or devil-fish, which attacked the hero of Victor Hugo's Toilers of the Sea, and it has been declared of him that he will leave the water and attack a man on the shore. Certainly in any contest with the octopus in the Crystal Palace Aquarium, either in or out of the water, a man would have much the best of it. The octopus belongs to the family of "cuttles," and is a carnivorous mollusc, with a body enclosed in a soft, thick, tough, elastic bag, instead of being enclosed—as in the case of the whelk, who is the poor relation of the same family—in a hard spiral shell. For a foot the octopus has a broad flat organ, cut up radially into eight strips, which are armed on their under surfaces with rows of cup-shaped suckers, with which it can take firm hold even after death. The bases of the eight feet are connected by a thin webbed skin, and when the animal wishes to shoot backwards through the water these bases are drawn together, while the swiftness of the motion is increased by the stream of water which the creature forcibly ejects from a short pipe or funnel, and by altering the position of which, it can change the direction of its progress. Shrimps are the food on which the octopus and its near relative, the eledone, in the same tank, live, and when they are hungry they sally forth from their home and drop down over the sand where the shrimps are burrowing. These feel their persecutors and endeavour to fly, but the thin webbed skin connecting the eight feet of the octopus encloses them like a net, and they are the monster's prisoners, to be devoured at his leisure.

Of sea anemones, there are in the Crystal Palace Aquarium twenty-one species, all alive and doing well. Of these the largest is the Tealia crassicornis, or thick-horned anemone, which, owing to its great size, sometimes ten inches across when fully expanded, permits its interior to be easily examined. The smallest in the aquarium is never more than one-tenth of an inch in diameter at its greatest stretch. Although to the uninstructed and unobservant eye these anemones appear to belong to the vegetable rather than to the animal kingdom, looking like specimens of weed or fungus, only two, they being coral, out of the twenty-one specimens in the Crystal Palace Aquarium are absolutely non-locomotive, being fixed immovably during the whole of their existence to a hard base. All the others have the power of locomotion, accomplished in a snail-like manner, in various degrees: one of them, the plumose anemone, having been known to travel from three to six inches in twenty-four hours. The anemones are carnivorous, and are fed with the flesh of the mussel, which is cut into small pieces, and being handed to them by an attendant, with a pair of wooden tongs, is grasped by the tentacles, and by them conveyed to the mouth in the centre of the topmost disc, which, gaping open, receives it and passes it into the stomach. The high state of health of this collection of anemones is shown by the fact that they are almost all nearly constantly open, even by day, this being the normal condition of anemones in the sea, where they are seldom closed, save when in the act of taking food, or when stranded. In the Crystal Palace, indeed, they are quite as much expanded by day as by night, though, with one exception (anthea), they are nocturnal. As the process of seeing them and the other animals fed is very popular, especially with the visitors on Saturday afternoons, it has been found necessary to make Sunday

a jour maigre, or absolute starvation day, in order to keep them in health. A curious proof of the need of an aquarium such as this, as a means of instruction, is to be found in the fact that most English people, of all classes, refuse to recognise water creatures as "animals." They may be fish, shell-fish, or anything but animals, as of course they are.

And now we take leave of our companion, having seen fully enough to be certain that in him the Crystal Palace Aquarium has a most efficient and devoted manager, and the inhabitants of its tanks a loving and intelligent curator, who, from natural ability and long study, knows, perhaps, more than any one else of the habits and necessities of the strange creatures whose home is under the sea.

A BATCH OF BALLS.

THAT no such weary and laborious task exists as that of marrying one's daughters, any matron will tell us, who, with method and monster drudgery, lays herself to the task. Under the average conditions of the world, it would be Sisyphean. The worn barrister who toils on for fifteen or twenty years before he gets a brief has an agreeable function compared with that of the matron who has to find husbands, instead of briefs, for her three hopeless and helpless daughters. But some blessed philanthropist arose, some angel of mercy, who saw and pitied, and then invented the ball. We shall never lose it, whatever inversions of society take place; we shall always have the ball left. There are, of course, infinite varieties, from the most elementary shape of the pastime to the highest. Here are some personal experiences of the genus.

To the hobbledehoy every shape of the delicacy—even the rudest—comes welcome. Like the schoolboy, he has an appetite for what is coarse and indigestible. In that state of life, while sojourning in lodgings by the seaside, I once received an invitation to Mrs. Rudd's soirée, or dance. It was an unpretending attempt, supported by slender resources, but was in reality a tremendous effort.

For days before we heard in the shops of Mrs. Rudd's party, and Miss Mirkins, the sole milliner of the place, was known to be busy making up at least two dresses for the same party. The confectioner had received orders, and once repairing there for lunch, I was told that a hawk-like old lady in black, who had been giving orders in a hoarse and confidential way to the chief of the establishment in a corner, was no other than Mrs. Rudd herself.

The mansion where the festivities came off was a sort of letting villa, one in a long row, where the lady had taken apartments for the season. When the guest entered the hall, his hat was violently taken from him by a robust country girl, who forthwith attached a large label to the crown by what seemed to be a huge corking-pin; for the material cracked and crunched under the cruel operation. It was immediately made to form part of a large bank or mound, which was being built up against the wall, and seemed already tottering. Another girl (lent) ran up-stairs to announce, and showed me to the hawk-faced hostess, who was dressed in a limp, black dress, and seemed to be allowed the privilege, as hostess, of being distinguished by an almost squalidness of attire. The room, a little lodging-house drawing-room, had been almost left bare, the furniture had been cleared out, and a few chairs were set round the wall with quite regimental accuracy. I saw the company arrive, who all entered with a sort of delight, as if after a long separation. The gentlemen were jocular; the ladies high-spirited; at whom a number of apparent spinsters seated round, their backs laid against the wall, gazed with delight. There was infinite zest and spirit over the whole—various young men always coming up to the hostess to consult or give advice, proud of their important relations with her, and she directing them in a maternal way. But there was a difficulty about the music. To gain room the family instrument, a cottage, with that guitar-like tone which such war-worn veterans commonly have, had been put outside the door, and at it Wilkie, the well-known stationer and librarian, who also sold cheap music, and this very instrument, presided. On special occasions Wilkie was accustomed to bring a little medicine-chest, so it appeared to be, but which he called a euphonion, which was placed on a chair beside him, and on which he played occasionally with his right hand, the effect being of a "jingle-jangle" sort, but in the place considered equal to a fine orchestra. On this occasion he had supplemented his own exertions with what he called a "cello." Yet on this night the united power of all instruments did not carry the music into the room, and the friendly young men held consultations with the hostess, vehemently urging on each other that some change

was necessary. They went to the unhappy performer privately, and in succession, in vain striving to stimulate him. The difficulty was to convey the reproof delicately to Wilkie, whose well-known testy disposition might resent such treatment. But nothing would do. In the room the dancers were all leaning forward in an attitude of attention, trying to catch the sound; some, fancying they had caught it, starting long in advance of the others. From experience, I can say myself that the effect was very odd and grotesque, the combined sound of the orchestra having a muffled effect, something like a musical-box, that was most exasperating. Experiments were tried, moving the instrument and chair right across the door, while the performer sat exactly in the doorway, with his back to the dancers. This answered to a certain extent, though it amounted to complete imprisonment, and shut Mr. Wilkie off from his "jingle-jangles" and his companion. However, the vigour of the performance never seemed to abate. The cheeks of the rustic young ladies blazed with a fiery heat, for the carpet had not been removed, and a grit-like dust was mounting in fine clouds, and getting into our throats. To the unsophisticated, however, this seemed enjoyable, and an element only common to all balls. They were happy in their delusion. At one, supper was served, our hostess being awfully exercised during the preceding half-hour, during which the maids had been rushing wildly up and down the stairs. There was none of that misplaced delicacy through which the genteeler host pretends to know nothing of what is going on. I will not even venture to deny that she had been in the kitchen herself, putting a few finishing touches. However, there it was, a banquet in itself: a great many glasses filled with pink and yellow liquid, glasses filled with a jagged yellow formation which we knew to be the jellies, glasses filled with cream; in fact, on analysis, the whole seemed to be contained in glasses; save, of course, the sandwiches. However, it was wonderful for her, a widow lady of moderate means, and we all felt obliged to her. After the meal, Mr. Wilkie, much refreshed, found himself once more in the doorway, and asserting his right to his faithful musical accompaniment, succeeded in getting the "jingle-jangles" within masterly reach, and played away till dawn.

I recal another party with which, however, the higher grotesque is associated. There was a mild retiring gentleman residing with his family between Richmond and Twickenham. I think he had to do with stock-broking; at least he went into London every day, and I always, on no evidence, set down the Stock Exchange as his destination. They had not been long among us, but his wife and two pretty girls, though shy, inspired an interest. The latter, we saw, enjoyed dancing; they were asked to all the little revels in the district. These compliments entailed obligations, which every one could see were resting on them uneasily. Soon, instigated by these prickings of conscience, and the restless pressure of the malicious, they were beguiled into issuing invitations to a sort of hybrid programme, half musical, half terpsichorean. From that hour a perceptible change was noticed in the hitherto smiling air of the family. They became wan and haggard, and borne down by an open weight of care. Mr. Cooke, such was his name, gave the idea of having some dark and fraudulent stock-broking transaction on his soul. But it was all the ball; they were overwhelmed and crushed by the sense of responsibility. Every refusal was a stab, and would be a disgrace to them. Yet owing to the labours of some interested friends all was going well, and all promised well. Still the forebodings of these unhappy people were to be realised.

Has it been remarked how often a contretemps is so nicely selected, as to fall on the weakest part of the victims, thus adding a special piquancy to the visitation? Thus, if the person dreading misfortune is peculiarly sensitive to ridicule, it is pitched so as to fall in this very direction. There is something almost demoniac in this. Now, as the Cooke family were a shy, sensitive party, shrinking away from rude jests, or even from light persiflage, they were to be selected for a visitation of a peculiarly grotesque and ridiculous kind, from which even robust natures would have shrunk.

The entertainment was about beginning, and so far was full of promise. The girls looked charming, and their spirits fast rising. Mrs. Cooke had already lost that shrinking away or "dodging" air, which always gave the idea that she was avoiding a blow. The embezzlement expression was fast passing away from her husband's face. The company was pouring in. They were being congratulated: "so successful," "quite a feature of the season," "so charming," when a little commotion arose at the other end of the room, where Mrs. Rounders, the curate's lady, was sitting.

Now, it has been mentioned that the whole parish felt a good-natured interest in the Cookes and their little undertaking. One result of this feeling was that Mrs. Rounders, a portly lady, with a large and regularly increasing family, though she had not been very well lately, resolved "that on no account would she disappoint her own girls, Harriet and Charlotte." She would take them herself, and she did so. She was now, or up to that moment had been, looking on with a smiling complacency and interest.

The phrase was used "regularly and increasing" family, and, indeed, no astronomer could count more accurately on the return of some planet than could the curate on that annual contribution to his household. But there was a disturbing element which no one had reckoned upon—the agitation and excitement. At the end of the room suddenly came a flutter, of which Mrs. Rounders seemed to be the centre. Faces looked anxiously towards the door, and a matron, in quality of aide-de-camp, came spurring to Mrs. Cooke. A hurried whisper, and a spasm of agony shot across the unhappy hostess's face. She flew to her husband, and his face seemed as though the embezzlement had really been discovered, and the officers of justice were waiting below. Horror was, indeed, on all faces, joined with helplessness. They could do nothing, and did nothing. From a distance it seemed as though friendly advisers, experienced, too, in these delicate matters, were pressing prompt retirement on the suffering lady, which was sternly and haughtily resisted. That sort of pride, which Charles Lamb was perhaps the first to point out, as always associated with the situation, was present. Her only terms were, that she should be carried from the room with the seat on which she reposed. The situation was so critical, that some resolute friends of the house, who, in the helplessness of the family, took all on themselves, at once agreed to it, and, with great promptness, brought up the two hired waiters, who seemed not a little perplexed at the service required of them, which was certainly not within the duties they had covenanted for. These men, however, are in the habit of seeing a good deal of life, and are perhaps astonished at nothing. But the amazed guests, who had no idea of what had happened, or was going to happen, were confounded at the spectacle of a portly lady, in ball-dress, flowers, &c., chaired through the rooms on the shoulders of waiters! I never shall forget the faces of a detachment of young officers just arriving, in their light manner, and encountering this procession on the stairs. They must have thought it was some rite of inauguration peculiar to the district.

After that it may be imagined with what heart the ball proceeded. On every face during waltz and galop was a sly twinkle. Even the musicians grinned as they fiddled. Meanwhile the stairs became a sort of thoroughfare. At one, arrived Doctor Gunter, the eminent practitioner in that line, who had been sent for from Kew, and had been called out of bed; he tramped upstairs, jostling the dancers who were passing down, and causing wonder and amazement. Women in large bonnets began to be seen. By two it was known through the mansion that everything had gone happily, and at a little after that hour, the curate himself, a red-faced gentleman, and Doctor Gunter, peremptorily called on the host to dismiss the guests, the latter saying "he would not answer for it" if this step were not taken. It had to be done. In three weeks we lost this amiable family, who never held up their heads again, and, indeed, could not bear to look any of us in the face. Mrs. Rounders, on the contrary, took all the airs of a heroine, and always maintained that "the Cookes had behaved with gross inhumanity;" Mr. Rounders even going so far as to say that "he'd like to have seen how they'd have looked if anything had gone wrong."

I recal a large public ball where, in the middle of a crowded waltz a sudden crash was heard, and a tall and elderly major in full regimentals was seen to fall. His partner rose at once, but the major lay so helpless, that the zealous stewards assumed that he was intoxicated, and collected round him with a view to removing him. Two attempted to raise him, laying aside their wands for the purpose; but an angry roar from the major, accompanied by an oath, made them desist, though it confirmed them in their original view. It was presently found that the elderly major's hip was broken—a heavy penalty to pay for a waltz. The scene then became an odd one; dancing was suspended, a vast crowd gathered round a prostrate gentleman in regimentals, who was lying perfectly flat, his eyes staring at the chandelier, the stewards gazing down on him as if on guard. The embarrassment was how to remove him. At the slightest touch he shrieked. A shutter, a door, were suggested. Finally, a squeaking sound was heard in the distance, and a party of

stewards and waiters appeared, propelling a large library sofa down the apartment. On this the major was hoisted with infinite difficulty, and wheeled away. As he passed through the door, followed by the stupefied gaze of all, the judicious leader of the orchestra struck up the Burlesque, or some such galop, and every one rushed at once "to take the floor."

How exciting at the county ball the whispers after supper, when it becomes known that an altercation had taken place below stairs between Mr. Gunn and Captain Horser. Every gentleman witnessed it, and told his version of the story to every lady. Horser had driven home, it was said, either to procure a horsewhip or a friend, though both articles, it may reasonably be supposed, were close at hand. "High words had passed," including that higher one, Puppy. Gunn had behaved with great spirit and temper, and showed himself on the ground for the rest of the night. In the morning, as a matter of course, handsome, in fact the handsomest, apologies were made on all sides, and Gunn and Horser became sworn brothers.

How pleasant the genuine county ball, where the young girls come from twenty miles round, hungry with perhaps a year's fasting from the dance, and fling themselves into it like famished mariners taken off an island; how the festival goes on until bright morning is shining in at the windows; and how curious the feeling of standing out on the steps in the fresh air, the lights still in the windows, the grass, the flowers, the inspiring breeze, all precisely as things would look about ten o'clock, after breakfast. More curious still the bare shoulders, the wreaths, and the faded eyes.

Sometimes, after a hard night's work, a craving hunger supervenes, intensified by the longed-for supper being delayed. This feeling is rare, for we but too often bring to the banquet a cloyed appetite. I can recal a kind of entertainment given by a pair who lived down at an old-fashioned mansion, and who, by a sort of mysterious épanchement, became of a sudden liberal and open-handed, and invited all their friends to a sort of al fresco entertainment, combining garden-walking and dancing. We were bidden for six, and most had arrived by seven. A long and weary night followed. It was announced that a supper would be served in the great hall at ten precisely; and this prospect served to detain many who would else have departed, and whose appetites the long drive and keen country air had whetted. For the sense of expectancy, of a wish always on the eve of being gratified, yet always disappointed, is a stimulant. The appointed hour passed by; half-past ten, eleven came round. Like Justice Greedy in the play, there "was a clapper in every one's stomach," signalling dinner-time; the laws of politeness were forgotten, and host and hostess were bluntly plied with the question, "What time would supper begin?" It then transpired that there was a certain Lord L. who had promised to assist, and these ancient toadies, who dearly loved an aristocrat, were determined to wait until he arrived. They were obstinate, rooted, mulish in this determination. No power on earth could get them to allow knife to be plunged into roasted bird before the august visitor should see the grand coup d'œil of the smoking board. Delicious savours, as of game well browned and savoury, came floating to us from the kitchen. This inflamed us the more, and at half-past eleven old Bolton, a rough customer, went to the host and stated, in a loud voice, that he could not let his health suffer from this fast, and that he must really ask for something to eat at once. On this bold demand, a number of cries broke from the crowd. "My dear sir, you surely don't want to starve us. For goodness sake open your rooms. Mrs. Blank is really delicate, and complains of faintness." Nothing would do. The host indeed said he would go and see, and did go and see, actually followed by the whole herd of the hungry, who kept their eyes on him. Presently appeared a servant or two bearing some bottles of sherry and a plate of biscuits. This was received almost with a cry of disgust and rage; not so much from the character of the food as from the certainty it offered of farther delay. What would have followed in the state of public exasperation I know not; for Mr. Bolton and some of the more weighty public men were holding a sort of caucus, when Lord L. was at last announced. Almost at once a rush was made to the supper-room door, where numbers had already taken up their places, like pittites waiting "the opening of the doors." When they were at last opened, the lord, who was leading the hostess, was swept away in the unseemly tumult. All decency was forgotten, places were scrambled for, and I actually saw Mr. Bolton carrying away a dish of roast wild-duck to his own part of the room. But the worst was to come. It was to be a good old-fashioned sitting-down supper, and the room was

only equal to containing scarce half the assembled guests. Every place was filled, to the rage and disappointment of those who found themselves shut out, a famished look in their eyes as they crowded restlessly behind the chairs of those who were busily engaged cutting up the roasted birds, and indecently gobbling. These last showed no signs of hurry, but bestowed themselves as for a protracted occupation. Gradually, on repeated helpings, limbs, breasts disappeared, then side-bones; husbands pressing their wives (whom they had taken in with them, but the crisis made everything exceptional), until those standing up were inflamed to madness. At the end there was, in fact, nothing left for them but some meagre fag-ends of cream or jelly—a sponge cake or two—an insult to offer to a hungry man.

PLEADING.

Give me thy faith, that looking down
The misty vale of years,
I, too, may see our dear life's crown
Repaying present tears.
Give me thy faith so firm and strong,
Thy trust so large and free,
To feel the years that roll along,
But bring me nearer thee.

Give me thy hope to charm away
My life's untold regret,
And whisper to my heart it may
Know love's own gladness yet.
Give me thy hope, so warm, so dear,
So sunny and so sweet,
To teach my heart with olden cheer,
And new-born life to beat.

Give me thy patience, dear, to wait,
Till from time's hand hath flown
The crowning hour designed by fate,
To blend our lives in one.
Give me thy patience, hope, and faith,
I need them, thou art strong;
But I am weary unto death:
This waiting is so long!

CHRONICLES OF LONDON STREETS.

CHARING-CROSS.

There is a tradition that Charing was so named by Edward the First in memory of his "chère reine," his dear Queen Eleanor, whose corpse rested here for the night on its way from Lincoln to Westminster. The real derivation is cerre, Anglo-Saxon for bend; and ing, Anglo-Saxon for meadow. Charing is, therefore, the meadow at the bend of the river, for just there the river makes a great turn southward. In 1260, a chronicler talks of "the village of Charing."

There were ten Eleanor crosses in England; of these three only now remain. That at Charing is supposed to have been the most costly. It was octagonal, built of the fine-grained Caen stone, with Purbeck marble steps, and eight gilt metal figures, and rising, with pinnacle above pinnacle, like a petrified fountain. It was long supposed that Pietro Cavallini, a contemporary and assistant of Giotto, designed the cross, but it is now known to have been the work of Masters Richard and Roger de Crundale, who received for their labour some five hundred and ninety pounds seven shillings and fivepence. William Torel, a London goldsmith, modelled the figures, which were carved by one Alexander, of Abingdon. On Queen Eleanor's tomb in Westminster Abbey, executed by the aforenamed Torel, seventeen hundred pounds were expended. The cross now in the court-yard of the Charing-cross Station was the work of Mr. E. M. Barry, A.R.A., who put together the details with care from the three rude drawings which are the only extant records of the old memorial. It is, however, spoiled and dwarfed by being placed so near a lofty and huge building. The old cross was pulled down by the Puritans in 1647, and it took the Roundheads three months to destroy. Some of the stones went to form a pavement before Whitehall, while others were sold to antiquaries to make knife-handles. The site remained vacant thirty-one years.

The spot left bare by Puritan bigotry became a slaughter-yard at the Restoration. Hugh Peters, Cromwell's chaplain, Major-General Harrison, Colonel Jones, and Colonel Scrope, were executed here. They died like brave, pious, and sincere men. Harrison—the son of a Staffordshire farmer—had been a lawyer's clerk in Clifford's Inn, till he was called to lay down pen and take up sword. He died repenting nothing, disavowing nothing. When some brutal fellow in the crowd shouted, "Where is your good old cause now?" he replied, smiling, and clapping his hand on his breast, "Here it is; and I am going to seal it with my blood!"

When he caught sight of the gallows he was transported with joy, and said to one who asked him how he did, "Never better in my life."

"Sir," said a faithful servant, "there is a crown of glory prepared for you."

"Yes," replied the staunch old Ironside, "I see!"

On rising from the sledge, the hangman asked his forgiveness.

"I do forgive thee," he said, "with all my heart, and I wish thee all happiness. Alas!

poor man, thou doest it ignorantly; the Lord grant that this sin be not laid to thy charge."

Then he gave the man all the money in his pocket, embraced his servant, and went up the ladder with a calm and undaunted countenance.

The cruel rabble, seeing his knees shake, called out with curses that the regicide rogue was shaking with fear.

"Gentlemen," cried this old lion, "by reason of some scoffing that I hear, I judge that some do think that I am afraid to die, by the shaking I have in my hands and knees. I tell you NO, but it is by reason of much blood I have lost in the wars, and many wounds I have received in my body, which causeth this shaking and weakness in my nerves. I have had it this twelve years. I speak this to the praise and glory of God. He hath carried me above the fear of death. And, gentlemen, take notice, that for being an instrument in that cause which hath been pleaded against us, and which God hath witnessed to by many appeals and wonderful victories, I am brought to this place to suffer death this day, and if I had ten thousand lives I could freely and cheerfully lay them all down to witness to this matter."

Immediately after he was hung, they cut down the old soldier's body, and slashed it open. The moment the hangman's knife touched the flesh, the great heart is said to have made one beat more, and they declare that, in his agony, Harrison arose and struck the executioner a stalwart blow on the face.

They all died in this spirit. When Cooke, another brave Puritan, parted from his wife, as he entered the sledge, he said: "I am going to be married in glory this day. Why weepest thou? Let them weep who part and shall never meet again."

The last words of Scott, another of these Cromwellians, were: "God engaged me in a cause not to be repented of—I say in a cause not to be repented of."

Colonel Jones said to the weeping child of a fellow-sufferer: "Suppose your father were to-morrow to be King of France, and you had to tarry a little till you could join him, would you weep so? Well, he is going to reign with the King of Kings."

When he saw the sledge, he said: "It is like Elijah's fiery chariot, only this goeth through Fleet-street."

And as he embraced a friend at the door of Newgate, he exclaimed: "Farewell! I could wish thee in the same condition as myself, that our souls might mount up to heaven together, and share in eternal joys."

Hugh Peters was treated with great cruelty. The Cavaliers made him sit on the scaffold and see a friend hung and quartered, while some came and upbraided Peters with the king's death. He replied calmly: "Friend, you do not well to trample on a dying man; you are greatly mistaken. I had nothing to do in the death of the king."

The hangman then came up rubbing his crimson hands, and said, sneeringly: "Come, how do you like this? How do you like this work?"

Peters replied calmly: "I am not, I thank God, terrified at it. You can do your worst."

His last words were: "Oh, this is a good day. He is come that I have long looked for, and I shall soon be with Him in glory." And he smiled as he passed away.

The statue of Charles the First, at Charing-cross, was erected in 1674, fourteen years after the Restoration. The statue, cast by Le Sœur as early as 1633, had suffered as many vicissitudes as the exiled monarch who raised it as a memorial of the father whom he disgraced. From a document in the State Paper Office, it has been discovered that it was originally ordered by Lord Treasurer Weston, afterwards Earl of Portland, a proud and mean courtier, of whom Clarendon has left a dark-tinted portrait, for his gardens at Roehampton. But no flowers were to bud and bloom around that pedestal, and in no quiet bocage of rose and honeysuckle was it to sun itself. Instead of standing in the quiet garden where the only sounds were the splash of fountain and the song of bird, the statue was to be the centre of the rush and roar of a great city, and after being buried by crafty Royalists for many years, came to Charing-cross, to stare steadfastly for centuries at that fatal window of the Whitehall banqueting-house.

There is an old legend about the statue, that the sculptor forgot to carve a girth, and, chagrined at his carelessness, destroyed himself when told of the omission. But whatever death Le Sœur died, that could not have been the cause, for there is a girth passing over a very strong rein on the right. Still, Time does gnaw at the statue, for in 1810 the sword, buckles, and straps dropped off, and about the time of the coronation of Queen Victoria, 1838, the sword (a real rapier of the Carolan period) was stolen. A hole in the metal also indicates where

the George pendant once hung. The pedestal, now honeycombed by time, is not the work of Grinling Gibbons, as was once thought, but of Joshua Marshall, master-mason to Charles the Second, a man who was engaged by Wren in the erection of Temple Bar and the Monument, and who, as registers show, resided in St. Dunstan's parish.

This statue was cast in 1633, in a piece of ground near St. Paul's, Covent Garden. Not being erected when the Civil War broke out, the brazen horse and its stately rider were sold by the parliament to John Rivet, a brazier with an appropriate name, who lived at the Dial, near Holborn Conduit, with stern and strict orders to instantly break up the accursed thing. But the shrewd Royalist, willing to bide his time, buried Le Sœur's statue in his cellar, and deceived the Puritan senate with some shapeless lumps of old brass. The astute patriot made a fortune by manufacturing brass handles for knives and forks, and announcing them as made from the metal of the destroyed statue; for the Cavaliers purchased them as relics, the Puritans as mementoes of their triumph. Rivet, chuckling, soon doubled his prices, and took the money of both factions with equal complacency. At the Restoration, Rivet refusing to deliver up the statue, had a replevin served upon him to compel the surrender, but he fought bravely for a large reward. The dispute lasted many years. How the wrangle ended we know not, but in 1674 the statue appeared at Charing-cross. Le Sœur, it is supposed, died before the statue mounted sentinel in the long-destined place. This Le Sœur—a French pupil of the famous John of Bologna—executed several monuments for Westminster Abbey, and also that copy of the Fighting Gladiator which once stood on the parade in St. James's Park, and is now at Hampton Court.

When the statue was erected, Waller, who had written so nobly on the great Protector, tuned his harp in the Royalist key, and produced the following feeble lines, which sufficiently betray their writer's insincerity:

That the first Charles does here in triumph ride,
See his son reign where he a martyr died,
And people pay that reverence as they pass
(Which then he wanted) to the sacred brass,
Is not th' effect of gratitude alone,
To which we owe the statue and the stone,

but to show mortals eternally that,

Rebellion though successful is but vain,
And kings so kill'd rise conquerors again.

But the other side, too, had their say about the new statue. Andrew Marvell, one of the bitterest and most honest of political satirists, wrote an imaginary conversation between the Charing-cross horse and a stone horse with a stone Charles the Second upon its back, which had been erected at Woolwich.

The Charing-cross horse says of Charles the Second, with terrible virulence, that it is a disgrace

That he should be styled Defender of the Faith
Who believes not a word what the Word of God saith.

Woolwich replies with equal gall:

That the duke should turn Papist and that church defy,
For which his own father a martyr did die.

Charing:

Though he changed his religion I hope he's so civil
Not to think his own father has gone to the devil.

The poet sums up the character of James:

With the Turk in his head and the Pope in his heart,
Father Patrick's disciple will make England smart,
If e'er he be king I know Britain's doom,
We must all to the stake or be converted to Rome.
Ah Tudor! ah Tudor! of Stuarts enough,
None ever reigned like old Bess and her ruff.

Woolwich:

But canst thou devise when kings will be mended?

Charing:

When the reign of the line of the Stuarts is ended.

The pedestal of Charles the First's statue is seventeen feet high, and is adorned with trophies of armour, Cupids and angels, the arms of England, and palm-branches. On the north and south sides weeping children support what are, we think, intended for crowns of thorns. The iron railing, thirty feet in diameter, is now removed. In Queen Anne's time, forty small square stone posts surrounded the pedestal, and the spot was a favourite stand for sedan-chairs.

Archenholz, a Prussian traveller who visited England in 1784, tells a curious anecdote of the Charing-cross statue. During the war in which General Braddock was defeated in America, and poor Admiral Byng was thrown to the lions as a scapegoat for our loss of Minorca, an unlucky Spaniard was arrested by a mob near Whitehall as a French spy. A loud-voiced bully in the crowd at once proposed to mount him behind Charles the First. A ladder was procured, and the wretched Spaniard forced up for that disagreeable ride, to be loaded with insult and pelted with mud. Luckily for the Spaniard, a cabinet minister just then passing by, stopped his coach, and in mere pity questioned the forlorn man. On

discovering the mistake of the mob, the minister quieted the rabble, got the man safely down, and, driving him to the Spanish ambassador's, apologised for the folly and cruelty of the London crowd.

The pillory often erected at Charing-cross, received many strange occupants. In August, 1685, that enormous rascal, Titus Oates, thrust his brazen flat face through its aperture, after being stripped of the gown he had soaked in the blood of innocent men, and after being lashed by the hangman's drudge from Aldgate to Tyburn, and here he received, let us hope, an ample dose of stale eggs, cabbage-stumps, mud, and other unconsidered trifles.

In 1727, that vile rascal who so tormented Pope — Edmund Curll, the publisher of everything that was infamous— stood in the same place for printing some disgraceful work. No eggs, however, flew around his frightened face, for, with the reptile's usual subtlety, he had had circulated printed papers, telling the mob that he stood here for vindicating the memory of the late Queen Anne. The rabble allowed no one to touch the sham martyr, and at the end of his time carried him off, in compassionate triumph, to refresh him with wine at a neighbouring tavern.

In June, 1731, there peered out of the Charing-cross pillory another scoundrel, whom Pope has left nailed for ever on the barn-door of infamy among other vermin. Japhet Crook, alias Sir Peter Stranger, a brewer, on Tower-hill, had forged the conveyance to an estate, and also fraudulently obtained a will. He stood one hour before a not very sympathetic mob, then was seated in an arm-chair, and had his ears cut off, his nostrils slit with scissors, and was then branded with a hot iron. The rogue, however, had some pluck, for he laughed in the pillory, denied his guilt, and bore the rough surgery without flinching. He was removed to the Ship Tavern, close by, and then returned to the King's Bench for life. Yet the dog was lucky after all, for forgery was made felony by statute soon after, and only six days after Japhet's punishment a Stepney victualler was hanged for the same offence. Six years after this Hogarth laid the scene of his Night at Charing-cross, and shows us candles stuck in every window for illumination night, the Salisbury High Flyer coach upsetting over the brands of a street bonfire, and the narrow roadway blocked up above with huge swinging signs, and below by projecting bulkheads.

In 1763, the impudent contriver of the Cock-lane Ghost mounted the old pillory at the West-end cross. The manufacturer of the rapping and invisible ghost was Parsons, the parish clerk of St. Sepulchre's, who had a spite against a Norfolk gentleman who had once lodged with him, and afterwards sued him for a debt. The object of Parsons's ghost was to make foolish people believe that the ex-lodger had poisoned his wife's sister, with whom he lived, and who had died suddenly in obscure lodgings of virulent small-pox. The rapper was Parsons's child, a cunning little minx of twelve. This was the origin of modern spirit-rapping, and ghosts since that, having no voices of their own, have much affected this mode of spiritual communication. So sweet, however, is imposture of the quasi-supernatural kind to some people, that the mob did not pelt Parsons, but actually took round the hat for the sufferer, who was imprisoned for a year in the King's Bench.

The National Gallery, that exquisite specimen of English architecture, stands on the site of the Royal Mews, where our English monarchs kept their falcons and horses from the Conquest down to the twenty-sixth year of the reign of Henry the Eighth. The king's falconers were men of power and wealth, and of great influence at court. In Richard the Second's time that knight so often mentioned by Froissart, Sir Simon Burley, who was put to death by the Duke of Gloucester, in spite of the king's and the young queen's entreaties, held this office. In the reign of Henry the Fourth, Chaucer was Clerk of the Mews, so that we can feel sure that most of the allusions to the proud keen birds in the Canterbury Tales were drawn from life.

After Edward the Sixth the mews became the royal stables, and here a M. St. Antoine, a court riding-master, whose portrait Vandyck drew, caracoled and trotted; here, too, Cromwell barred up the factious Colonel Joyce, the rough-and-ready man who arrested King Charles, and would not succumb quite enough to iron Oliver. In 1732, the mews were rebuilt with three absurd stone cupolas, as mean as they were hideous. Years afterwards, Cross's Menagerie, removed from Exeter Change in 1829, turned them into a temporary Noah's Ark, and after that they served as a storehouse for national records that, being then, as now, more precious than the crown jewels, were bundled anywhere, any how, by crass-headed officials.

In 1824, a generous and patriotic parliament voted seventy-six thousand pounds for royal stables at Windsor, and fifty thousand pounds for a national picture gallery. Mr. C. Wilkins was the genius chosen to rear the national edifice, and he did rear it with a vengeance. It was not opened till 1838, and an eye-opener it then was. It was cobbled up with the bricks of Kent's mews, and some Corinthian columns from Carlton House. A toy-house, a washing-basin, and two pepper-castors, suggested the details. It was only as deep as Mr. Wilkins's intellect, and about five hundred feet long. It was Vanbrugh and Kent, in fact, mixed together, with all the faults of each, and flavoured with Wilkins, and it has been well called "a handsome front to St. Martin's workhouse."

William the Fourth is said to have suggested the name of Trafalgar-square and the erection of the Nelson column, commenced by a grateful country three-and-thirty years after Nelson fell. The site was much fought over, and eight sculptors and architects were for it and four against it. Mr. Chantrey declared that "it was the most favourable site that could be found or imagined for any national work of art." What enthusiast first said "it was the finest site in Europe" we do not know, but probably the same enlightened man who thought the torso "a fine thing if it only had the features." The square was pushed on fast. Begun in 1827, it was what some people called completed in 1847. The column on which Nelson stands guarding a coil of pig-tail and an anchor, as if "mast-headed by Immortality," was commenced in 1837, and completed the other day. Mr. Railton spent ten thousand pounds on the granite alone; two thousand and forty-eight pounds eleven shillings and twopence were originally subscribed, and thirty-three thousand pounds odd spent. The column and base measure one hundred and ninety-three feet, the Trajan column being only one hundred and forty-three feet, but then height is easier to obtain than merit.

The Chantrey statue of George the Fourth cost four hundred and fifty pounds, and was ordered by the king himself, who somewhat mistrusted the national appreciation of his merits. It was originally intended to crown the eighty-three thousand pounds (the marble) arch at Buckingham Palace.

At the granite fountains we will fling no more mud; but, gracious Heavens! what a contrast to those say of the Place de la Concorde, where, over the large-limbed nymphs the generous water casts its lavish floods, and, glittering in the sunbeams, sprinkles its rainbow bubbles, bright as hope and evanescent as military glory, momentary as the life of man, ephemeral as national gratitude. Are we denied the power even to copy great works? Can selfish despotism or brawling republicanism alone produce those great works of art that should ennoble and beautify one of the master cities of the world?

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XIV. CORNERED.

THINGS were very bad indeed in the City. Discount was almost as impossible as credit, and the number of iron safes that were pointed at as containing "securities, sir, worth five-and-twenty thousand pounds, upon which, I give you my word, I cannot raise five hundred," was incredible. The City correspondents of the various journals were unanimous in stating that the money-market had a "downward tendency." Consols were lower than they had been within ten years; French rentes were nowhere; and at the Turkish and Egyptian scrip, in which a good deal of light and innocent gambling had recently taken place, men shook their heads ominously. The sensation of the week had been the collapse of the Great Discount Company, which two years before had been formed, on the limited-liability principle, out of the old-fashioned house of Reddie and Wryneaux, a firm whose word was at any time good for a million. Whether old Mr. Reddie quietly withdrew all his money as soon as the new company was in working order, instead of leaving it in, as he promised; whether young Mr. Wryneaux not merely drew out his own money, but a great quantity belonging to other people; whether it was through simple mismanagement or base fraud, no one knew, but the company came to smash, and hundreds of families were plunged into ruin.

Then the panic began in earnest. When people unconnected with the City heard that the house of Reddie and Wryneaux (no one ever spoke of the company) had failed, they almost began to doubt the stability of the Bank of England. Everybody wanted to withdraw everything from anywhere where it might be deposited. There

were "runs" on private banks which had stood the test of the various influences on the money-market during a century, and which now nobly responded to the call. All the telegraph clerks in the country were sending off messages commencing with the words, "Sell at once," and the stock-brokers were nearly worried out of their lives by the multiplicity of the commissions thus forced upon them.

In this state of affairs one would have imagined that the shareholders and others interested in the success of the Terra del Fuegos mine would have felt some little disquietude; doubtless they did; but any of them taking the trouble to make a journey into the City would have had their speculations speedily set at rest, for the forty-eight hours' notice which Garcia had guaranteed to his principals had expired, and on arriving at the office the next morning the gentlemanly clerks found on the closed shutters a document, in Mr. Gillman's remarkably neat penmanship, informing the world that "business was temporarily suspended," and referring inquisitive applicants to some accountants' office close by. The gentlemanly clerks were not very much surprised at what they learned; they had been to a certain extent behind the scenes, and were always anticipating some catastrophe.

Not so the public, who came down with a swoop directly the news got wind, and hung about the doors, and read the written placard over and over again, and consulted with each other in the hopes of hitting upon some method of regaining a portion of the money, out of which, as they one and all fiercely declared, they had been swindled. Some of them were weak enough to go off to the accountants' office indicated on the placard, where they found themselves confronted by two very pert clerks, who told them all they knew of the business was, that the books of the company had been handed over to them for inspection, and that a report would be issued as soon as the necessary investigation had been made; they denied all personal knowledge of the directors or officers of the company, and said, as was the truth, that was the first time in which their firm had ever been employed in matters relating to the Terra del Fuegos mine. So the public departed in a crest-fallen condition from the accountants' chambers, and went back and loafed about in front of the offices again, deriving some feeble comfort from talking to fresh comers, and explaining to them the hopeless state of the investment in which they had a common interest.

But the other directors, who, whatever doubt they may have felt as to the continuance of the prosperity of the company, had risked their capital not merely for the sake of the high interest which it produced, but with the firm conviction, that long before the first rumblings of the approaching earthquake were generally felt, they would have such warning as would enable them to withdraw their ventures in safety, were wild with rage and disappointment. How the news had spread, in what mysterious fashion the fiery cross had been sent round, no one could tell; but by twelve o'clock several of the men, whose names had been prominent on the direction of the Terra del Fuegos mine, were met together in the board-room of the Friendly Grasp Insurance Office, the use of which had been temporarily accorded to them by the actuary, to whom most of them were personally known. There was Lord Ballabrophy, red-headed, red-bearded, and red-faced, chuckling, stammering, and uttering interjectional oaths, but yet with a certain air of breeding about him which did not fail to tell, even on his excited colleagues; there was the Honourable Pounce Dossetor, for the first time since his marriage with Miss Swank grateful that her trustees had safely invested her money, and left him only a few thousands to fool away; there was Sir Cannock Chase, not attending much to what was going on, but busied in reading a report from his steward, hinting at the existence of more coal on his Staffordshire property; and there, too, were Mr. Bolckoff and Mr. Parkinson, who, beyond all others, were savage at the turn which affairs had taken—the former sat at the long board-table, silent and white with rage, apparently immersed in certain calculations which he was making on the sheet of blotting-paper before him, while the latter strode up and down the room, speaking now to one man then to another, and from time to time using such language as his vicar never could have expected would have issued from the lips of that meek and virtuous churchwarden.

"Well, gentlemen," at last said Sir Cannock Chase, having finished the steward's report, and deriving some gleam of satisfaction therefrom, "it is no use wasting any more time in these discussions; the question is, can anything be done? If so, let us decide what it is to be; if not, let

us clear out of this, as I imagine we all of us have plenty of other things to attend to."

"We must put a bold face on the matter," said Mr. Dossetor, whose stake was small, and whose income was good; "we must stand to our guns."

"Shtand to our gons!" cried Mr. Bolckoff, looking off the blotting-paper, and taking his dirty fingers out of his mouth and waving them in the air. "How can I shtand to my gon mitout de ten thousand pounds von vhich I have been robt?"

"Then your gun was—he, he—a ten thousand pounder, Bolckoff?" chuckled Lord Ballabrophy.

"Vere is de chairman? vere is de general manager?" cried Mr. Bolckoff, with more gesticulation.

"If you knew that, Mr. Bolckoff," said Mr. Dossetor, "you might have a chance of getting back a portion of your ten thousand pounds. Mr. Parkinson, you seem to have taken the trouble to make inquiries in this matter; there is no doubt, I suppose, that Delabole and Vane have levanted?"

"About Delabole not the slightest in the world," hissed Parkinson from between his gleaming teeth. "I went round to his rooms in Piccadilly this morning, directly I heard this news. The hall-porter at the chambers told me that Mr. Delabole had gone away in a cab last night, taking two portmanteaus with him. He took no servants, but went alone. The cabman was directed to drive to King's Cross, but that was, of course, merely a blind; no doubt by this time," snarled Mr. Parkinson, dashing his hand upon the mantelpiece against which he was leaning, "he is safe across the Channel, with our plunder in his trunk."

"Do you think he has carried off much?" asked Sir Cannock Chase.

"Everything that he could lay his hands on," replied Parkinson.

Mr. Bolckoff uttered a groan and buried his dirty fingers in his stubbly hair.

"When I say everything," said Parkinson, not heeding the interruption, "I mean everything that is at the same time valuable and portable. His rooms—for I made an excuse to go up there to write a letter—are in much their usual state, and on inquiry at his stables, I found that his brougham and horses are still there; though we shall doubtless discover that they have been made away with for their full value. But, by what I learn from two or three brokers who were employed by him, he must have sold out every scrap he held in every company with which he was connected, and realised the lot."

"But, if auf der Continent, man muss die Polizei telegraphiren und hef ihm cote and sent back," said Mr. Bolckoff, nodding his head vehemently.

"Ah, to be sure!" said Lord Ballabrophy, "one could send after him—he, he—Pollaky, don't you know? and that sort of thing."

"Do you imagine," said Mr. Parkinson, quietly, "that it would be politic in us to invite legal interference in our affairs? I will put it as delicately as possible, but don't you think that in any investigation which might take place, certain revelations might be made—as, for instance, to the allotment and manipulation of shares—which might be more amusing to the outside public than to ourselves? Mr. Delabole is one of the cleverest of men, and would be the less scrupulous if provoked. Don't you think we had better leave him alone?"

"Certainly, most decidedly," said Sir Cannock Chase, adding in muttered tones, as he looked across the table at Mr. Bolckoff, "Dam stoopid foreigner!" With both of which sentiments the company assembled seemed generally to agree.

But Mr. Bolckoff was not to be put down by clamour. "But of Fane," he cried, "you have told me nichts of Fane!"

"Mr. Vane left London three days ago," said Parkinson. "It was stated at the last board meeting that he required a few days' absence, and so far everything was regular. It was understood that he was going into the country on business connected with his marriage."

"Ach Gott! dat will now be durchgefallen," cried Mr. Bolckoff. "Ven Fane had made die Pendixen seine frau, then could I my lost money have picked out of her fortune."

"That's a contingency that is now scarcely likely to occur, Mr. Bolckoff," said Parkinson. "When Vane hears the news of the smash here, he will doubtless postpone his marriage until he has settled his affairs in such a way as to render Mrs. Bendixen's fortune secure from his creditors. I went to his rooms too, but I found he had not been back. It is probable, therefore, that, confidential as were the relations between him and the chairman, our friend Mr. Delabole kept him in ignorance of the impending smash."

When Philip Vane found that Sir Geoffry Heriot, whom he had hitherto looked upon as likely to recover speedily from the attack made upon him, was actually dead, when the sudden thought shot through his brain that he was a murderer, the shock was too much for him, and, as we have seen, he fell senseless, coming to himself only to find that his crime was shrewdly suspected by Delabole, and to hear the few short bitter phrases in which his quondam accomplice severed the connexion between them, and expressed his horror at the deed which had been committed. Raising himself on his arm, Vane made an impotent attempt to delay Mr. Delabole's departure, to implore him to be silent and secret; but his voice failed him, and ere he could renew the effort, he heard the slamming of the door, and knew that he was alone.

Alone! and yet not alone. Rising to his feet, and staggering to a chair, Philip Vane saw before him the pallid cheeks and blood-stained features of the old man; saw the eyes closing, and the thin wiry figure slipping from his grasp; heard again the moan, the last sound he had heard in that accursed place. He tried to shut it all out from him, but it rose persistently before his view. He started from his seat, and attempted to proceed with the packing of his portmanteau, but found himself ever and anon pausing in the midst of his work, and recalling some incident or occurrence of the previous twenty-four hours. The mud on his trousers and boots, which Delabole had noticed—he must have got that in crossing the plantation and the lawn. The lawn! He sprang up in guilty terror as he reflected that, with the coming morning light, the track of his footmarks across the lawn would be revealed. The boots and trousers must be destroyed; he would take them with him in his flight, and get rid of them on the first opportunity. In his flight! whither was that flight to be directed? His plans must be all changed now; the necessity for immediate escape was urgent. He had relied on obtaining a temporary loan from Delabole, but that, of course, was no longer to be thought of, and the funds which he had at command were barely sufficient for his immediate wants.

Nevertheless he must fly, and at once. The dawning light showed him that a new day had begun, before the end of which the murder would probably have been fully discussed, all evidence possible to bear upon it duly sifted, suspicion rightly or wrongly directed, and all the machinery of justice for the detection and the arrest of the criminal set in motion. The problem of his fate would be solved by the next four-and-twenty hours; if before they had passed away he could contrive—following the route indicated by Delabole—to be well on the road to Bordeaux, with Spain, his ultimate destination, almost within his reach, he was saved. If not—what is that noise in his ears, as of tumbling table and smashing glass? There it all floats before him again; the book-covered walls, the large easy-chair, the shaded lamp, and the fragile figure with the blood-stained brow. Will it never cease to haunt him? It fades—it has gone.

Now he can bring himself once more to think what steps it is absolutely necessary he should take at once. Money; he must have money; and he must divest his mind of all this unreal fantasy, which from time to time surges up into it; he must shut out that horrible vision, and must make use of that common sense on which he has hitherto relied, and which has never yet failed him when anything of real importance was to be brought about. Money, where to get money for his immediate wants, that must be his first determination. Now if he were only confident of his power over Mrs. Bendixen, the course was clear. The time at which a clue to the identification of Sir Geoffry's murderer might be given would depend entirely on Madge; and if he judged her rightly, he was tolerably safe in her hands. The recollection of the tie still existing between them; the remembrance of the old days, which now seemed so far distant, and which he know—for his wife had often told him so—were surrounded by a halo of romance in her eyes; more than all, as he thought, her horror while denouncing the murderer, to have at the same time to proclaim him as her husband—for all these reasons her lips would be sealed. No one could tell whether, in the hurry and confusion, she had recognised the man who had sprung past her and hurled her to the ground; and from what he knew of Madge, she was just the woman to avail herself of such a plea as this, and to leave the direction of suspicion to other circumstances. There was no other evidence which he need fear, save that which Madge could give. His visit to Springside was entirely unknown, and the fact of the proximate smashing-up of the Terra del Fuegos Mining Company, just

announced to him by Delabole, instead of being, as it would have been at any other time, a source of rage and lamentation, was regarded by him as rather advantageous than otherwise, inasmuch as it provided a sufficient excuse for immediate flight.

Now as to his power over Mrs. Bendixen. From what he knew, he believed it to be sufficient to induce her to brave all the frowns of society, and to run away with him, provided only he had sufficient excuse for asking her to consent to such a step. That excuse again he finds in the ruin of the mine. If he could only see her it would not be difficult to tell her a previously planned story, in which he could represent himself as the victim of misplaced confidence in Delabole, and by which her sympathies could be aroused. That once done, the rest was tolerably easy. He knew Mrs. Bendixen's jealous, passionate nature, and had little doubt about being able to mould it to his will; but to achieve that result he must see her, and there was the difficulty. But one idea occurred to him. He must leave town at once by the very first train which would take him to Dover, and there was no reason why she should not come to him there, and give him an interview before he started for France. If he could induce her to do this, he relied upon himself for carrying out all that he desired.

He finished packing his portmanteau, in which he placed the trousers and boots which he had worn on the previous evening, and wrapping his dressing-gown round him, seated himself at the writing-table. Instantly, between him and the paper which he placed before him, rose the dread figure of the old man as he had last been seen in life, and it required all Vane's nerve to keep himself in the chair and stolidly and doggedly go through his appointed task. Even then his writing was weak and trailing, and nothing like his ordinary firm round hand. He noticed this, but thought it not inconsistent with the anxiety under which he had explained to his correspondent he was suffering, and which induced him to implore her to come to Dover by the first train after the receipt of the note, and to meet him on the pier. When he had sealed this letter, he walked to the window and threw open the shutters. It was already morning; the outlines of the opposite houses stood out grey and dim in the early light, and the black London sparrows were twittering blithely on the covered way. He had ascertained that the first train for Dover left soon after six, and had made up his mind to go by that. One starting a little later, it is true, would have reached Dover soon after; but Vane's chief anxiety was to be out of London, and though he might linger on the road, he would be tolerably safe from recognition. Looking at his watch he found that he would not have too much time to get to the station; and after a little deliberation as to whether he should or should not enlist the services of the gate-porter to carry his portmanteau, he determined to do so, and walking out, roused that functionary from his slumbers, and brought him to the rooms. The man seemed half asleep, but brightened up sufficiently to drink a glass of spirits which Vane presented to him, and then bore off the portmanteau on his shoulders. The one cab which was making the Piccadilly pavement echo with its horse's feet was then secured, and in it Vane drove off.

When he arrived at the station he alighted from the cab, but before dismissing the driver he handed him the letter which he had written to Mrs. Bendixen, and giving him a handsome gratuity, bade him take it at once to its address. He was hurrying into the booking-office, when he found the way temporarily blocked by a little procession of men, who were conveying huge bundles of newspapers from the ponderous red vans in which they had arrived, to the starting train. The newspapers! He had forgotten them. By this time the story of the murder must have arrived in town, and these newspapers were about to spread it through the country and the world; what was known about it, what was conjectured, it was all important that he should know, and yet he felt half afraid to satisfy himself.

He took his ticket, and made his way through the crowd of passengers—who were mostly of the poorer class, for the train was tardy and cheap—to the bookstall. The bundles of newspapers had already arrived there, and the smart young men behind the counter were opening, and sorting them, and slapping them down with refreshing vigour. As Vane approached, he saw one of these young men select two or three contents-placards from one of the bundles, and after shaking them out and perusing them himself, proceed to hang them up in front of the counter. "Murder at Springside"—there it was in large type; it caught Philip Vane's eyes instantly. He saw nothing else. "Murder at Springside"

—why were the letters printed in red, why —Steady! Now his head was reeling, and unless he could put more control over himself he was lost.

He steadied himself with an effort, walked to the stall and purchased a newspaper, which he placed in his pocket, and hurried to the train. There was no difficulty in securing a first-class carriage to himself, and bidding the guard lock the door, he threw himself into a seat, and drawing his travelling-cap over his eyes, buried his face in the upturned collar of his coat, and did not move until the train was fairly in motion; then he took the paper from his pocket, shook it open with trembling hands, and soon read as follows:

"Murder at Springside (by telegraph).—Sir Geoffry Heriot, K.C.B., was murdered last night at his residence, Wheatcroft, near this city. The person apprehended and charged with the commission of the crime is a discarded son of the deceased gentleman, who, it is stated, has been heard to vow vengeance against his father. Circumstantial evidence against him is very strong. Greatest excitement prevails in the city and the neighbourhood."

"My luck again!" cried Vane. "The arrest of this man gives me another twenty-four hours to the good, and when I have once seen Esther, and arranged with her to join me abroad, I may snap my fingers at them. 'The person apprehended and charged with the commission of the crime;' by Jove, then, Madge must be loyal to me after all, or she would have denounced me at once, and never have allowed this man—whoever he may be—to be taken into custody."

He threw the paper down, and for the rest of the journey remained buried in thought. The train loitered along, stopping at every little station, where porters came up and roared unintelligibly, where jolly Kentish yeomen, and red-cheeked Kentish lasses, looked in through the window at the solitary traveller, muffled in his wraps, who never looked up or took heed of aught that was passing around him. Now Folkestone, and the sea, calm, and smooth, and placid as a lake, with the sun, a great red globe of fire, shining down upon it. Now Dover, and Philip Vane has his portmanteau taken to the cloak-room; for he has decided, as he cannot cross over till the night boat, and as it is essential that he should not be seen at the Lord Warden, or any other of the places in the town where he is known, he must loiter about until the time for his interview with Mrs. Bendixen on the pier, and afterwards get some refreshment at a third-rate tavern.

Three hours at least must elapse before Mrs. Bendixen could arrive at Dover, even if she rose immediately on the receipt of the letter, and started by the next train: three long hours to be got through somehow. Under other circumstances he could have employed them well enough; he could have found friends staying at the hotels, could have watched the arrival and departure of the boats, or amused himself in many other ways. But now he must keep out of the chance of observation, and notwithstanding the comparative security which he felt since reading the newspaper paragraph, that horrible scene kept ever rising before his mind. He walked out to River—a pretty little village in the neighbourhood, which he recollected visiting with a pleasant party years before. Back into Dover, and on to the heights, whence he saw a light thin vapour, like a filmy veil, rise from the surface of the sea, and gradually approach the town, which it finally enwrapped, completely hiding it from his view. Back into the town again, where the streets were tolerably empty, the promenaders having been driven in by the damp mist. There was a small knot, however, collected before a window in the High-street. Philip Vane, looking up, saw that it was a newspaper office, and that the people were reading copies of the latest telegrams, written on filmsy paper, and stuck in the window. There were two or three slips side by side: mechanically he ran his eye over them—the state of the money-market and the price of stocks, the dissolution of the Spanish Cortes, the resignation of the Austrian Premier, the verdict and damages in a breach-of-promise case. What is this on the last sheet, which evidently has the greatest attraction for the bystanders? Philip Vane pushes among them and reads:

"The Springside Murder. — Strong rumours are prevalent of testimony conclusive as to the innocence of accused. Mr. L. Moss is here, engaged for the defence. The housekeeper has recovered, and will give evidence."

As Philip Vane's eyes lighted on these last words, the writing became indistinct; he reeled heavily to one side, and would have fallen, but for the strong arm of a friendly boatman, who caught hold of him, propped him up, and asked him what was the matter. Philip Vane muttered

something—that he was not well, that the mist had affected him.

"No harm in that, master," said the boatman, "it is but a sea fog; gets down your throat and makes all damp and uncomfortable, but no real harm in it. Coming on thick though now, ain't it? Won't be able to see your hands before your face soon—getting pitch dark, that it is; and yet belike three mile out at sea it is as clear as noon-day."

"Let us clear it out of our throats with a dram," said Vane, for he felt the necessity of some such support; and he and the boatman went into the nearest tavern, and swallowed each a glass of brandy.

When they came out the boatman bade his companion good-day, avowing that the darkness of the fog had spoiled any chance of his getting a job, and that he should go home; while Vane made his way towards the pier. In the broad open space before him, just by the commencement of the pier, the air was lighter, and it seemed as though the mist were clearing off; this effect, however, was but momentary, and as Vane ascended the steps a black mass of vapour, thicker and denser than ever, came stealing silently from the sea like a moving wall.

The half-dozen promenaders who had been tempted out again by the momentary gleam of sunshine, and were now hurrying back, gazed with curiosity at the man about to face such weather, and some of the young ladies tittered as Philip passed. Blacker and blacker still. He heard the rough voice of the coast-guardsman, addressing him as "mate," and bid him be careful how he stepped, but he could not distinguish his frame. Below him he heard the voices of two or three sailors in the steamer alongside the pier, and could just make out the outline of her paddle-box and her funnel; still he pressed on.

"The housekeeper has recovered and will give evidence." That must be Madge, he thought, that must be the position she was filling at Wheatcroft, that was how she was brought into frequent communication with Drage, the parson. "Would recover and give evidence." Recover! then she must have been ill, or hurt, or frightened, and that was how the dead man's son had been given into custody unknown to her. "Would give evidence!" That, connected with the rumours of testimony to establish the innocence of the accused, means that Madge will state what she saw, and give the name of the man whom she recognised as the murderer. No time to be lost, then. This interview with Esther Bendixen once rightly settled—What's that? a block of stone, an iron crane, a windlass and—gently now, this must be the end of the pier where the works are yet in progress. Dark just here; let him creep along the side of the wall, let him—the next instant he had caught his foot and stumbled, and was fighting with the calm placid water below. He was a swimmer, and coming to the surface again, had but little fear; three strokes brought him to the great wall of masonry sunk in the sea, but it was cold, and smooth, and slippery with shining weed, which broke away under his hands. No chance for hand-hold or foot-hold either, no power of seeing more than half a dozen feet in front of him. He shouted, but his voice fell flat and muffled on the heavy air, and he knew that his shouts could not be heard. He struggled again, but he was overweighted with his clothes, and his strength was failing. Let him keep his head now and make one more trial; again the cold smooth wall and the trailing, yielding seaweed; then a conviction of the impossibility of struggling much more, a few struggles, and one piercing cry.

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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XXIII. SIMON IN TORMENT AGAIN.

SIMON FINISTON was getting very old and frail, and the fall of the year was particularly hard upon him. It was severe work going out to pick sticks and straws, in order that he might have a fire to sit by in the evenings; and he was bloodless and chilly, and felt the want of a bit of fire more than he used to do. Tibbie, too, was cross, and would no longer patch his old gown; and his heart failed him when he thought of taking forth an extra garment from those presses on the high gallery, whose contents that mad pedlar had so strangely forborne to buy.

The coming of winter was always the beginning of a long affliction to the old man; and the affliction now threatened to grow more tragic every year, as the sufferer grew more feeble, and his tormentors became more bold. The roof in the west wing had given way so far that the rain found its way down to Simon's den. He had to flit to the east wing, which was terribly at the mercy of the winds, the walls being unnecessarily riddled with windows, and the windows riddled by time. The shutters banged and crashed, now scattering the plaster to the floor as they lashed the wall, now shivering the remnants of glass in the panes as they fell forward, and shook even the stout oaken framework of the windows. When bound up into order and forced to keep the peace by use of their rusty bars, they threw the interior of the rooms into utter darkness. But as sensitiveness to cold was, and deafness was not, one of Simon's infirmities, the noise and the light were put in bondage together, and the wind was kept at bay.

Simon's miseries were not all of wind and weather; blasts might be keen, and rain pitiless, but both were angels of mercy compared to Tibbie, who saw a time approaching when, the old man's wavering spark of life having suddenly sunk and gone out, it might be found that he had not made a will in favour of Con the fool. She knew no reason now why his last days should not be made wretched, in order that he might be forced to frame that will. Simon was not ill in his bed, so that he was not so completely at her mercy as he had been once before, but there was much power in her hands, and she used it. She would come and sit on a bench opposite to him, and rail at him till the shrieking of the wind seemed the mere echo of her voice, and the moaning and thundering outside among the trees only a weird demonstration of applause from that invisible spirit world with which she threatened him. He was horribly superstitious, and was far more afraid of the ghosts among the trees, whom Tibbie talked about, than of the thieves who, she assured him, were ever prowling about seeking for his hoards. As a security against the latter he slept in all his clothes, and with a blackthorn staff in his feeble hands; but he knew of no precaution that he could take against the spirits. These, Tibbie assured him, were only waiting for his death, in order to carry him away with them to where they could wreak their vengeance on him during the leisure of eternity. The only thing which could stave off such horror, and balk the malice of the spirits, would be that simple act of justice which Tibbie prayed

her master yet to do. But Simon still refused thus to protect himself. It was like tearing his soul from his body, the thought of signing away with his own hand his long-worshipped money-bags and wasted acres.

As for Tibbie, why she so wished to see that will made might well have been a puzzle to any one. Con was as happy as a fool could be, roaming about the country, fostered by everybody, and always pleased with the variety and freedom of his life; always coming back from each fresh expedition to sit at the feet of blooming Nan Kearney, watching her blissfully as she wove her baskets, and crowing for joy if she stopped to pat him on the head. But this was not the way of life that Tibbie had marked out for him. She was willing enough that he should be fed about the country, and that strangers should give him clothing out of pity, but she desired that he should keep close by the miser of Tobereevil, that he should sing for him, dance for him; so that, while she carried on her persecution, the fool might be as a refuge to the wretched old man, who should turn to him for relief, and perhaps do out of gratitude that which he refused to do from fear. Con hated Tobereevil, and had no use for money. Were he owner of all the miser's wealth it would be hard to make him comprehend that such was the case; still harder to make him assume the rights of mastership, and Tibbie would certainly have all the power in her own hands. What use would she make of her power, and how enjoy her good fortune? A miserable creature clothed in rags, with her arms folded grimly, and a dreary, dreamy look in her half-shut eyes, she prowled about the old mouldering mansion, listening to the groaning of the trees, and thinking about that huge iron safe which was built up in the wall somewhere, and of which she was determined one day to have the key. When Tibbie came to Tobereevil long ago she was a respectable poor woman, seeking for help for her little nephew, and had travelled a long way to bring him under the notice of his kinsman. When she presented herself at Tobereevil her utmost ambition had been a cottage, rent free, and a small pension or dole of clothing for little Con. These denied, she accepted the permission to shelter herself in the kitchen of the mansion, and to pick up scanty food as remuneration for her services in the house. But it seemed that greed was in the air of Tobereevil. Tibbie would now have failed to remember when aspiration after the miser's money-bags had first struck root within her; but it was rank and strong, and could not now be torn away, and it had crushed every other passion of her nature.

Whilst Tibbie was in the midst of her active operations, she was shocked by hearing a rumour that Paul Finiston was in the country, and that very evening fell to stitching together the stuff which she had bought so cheap from the pedlar. Never before had she had the heart to bring it out, and now, as she hurried to her treasury and drew forth the stuff which was sufficient at least to cover her respectably, she cursed her ill fortune which furnished her with only a web of cloth, at the moment when she needed clothing ready made. However, she hacked it with blunt scissors, and sewed it with a rusty needle; and though she lost a whole day over it, she was in the end well bedight, and felt magnificent enough in her appearance to awe the whole mountain world. She washed her face in a somewhat superficial manner, and further arraying herself in a moth-eaten cloak, little worn, but of ancient date, departed on her search for news of Paul; having first looked in at the door of Simon's den, and advised him to look sharp after his keys, for she was just stepping out at the risk of her life to watch some ill-looking characters whom she had seen prowling about the place. Having thus provided for her master's comfort during her absence, she took her way to the mountains. The Kearneys would give her news, if any news were to be had. Their young gossoons were for ever upon the foot. And as Con would very likely be found hovering about their place, so Con should be Tibbie's excuse for coming panting up the hills.

Much amazed were the young Kearneys to see Tibbie on the mountain; even more so than they had been to see Con arriving amongst them upon the shoulders of a gentleman. Very few in the country knew a great deal about Tibbie. The mother of the Kearneys had never seen her before, so that the gossoons had to whisper her:

"Mother, mother! it is the miser's Black Cat!"

"I don't see no cat wid the good woman," said Mrs. Kearney. "Only our own poor pussy goin' to meet her on the brae."

The gossoons laughed in chorus, and plucked at their mother's skirts. They

cried that the world was coming to an end, for the Black Cat had got a gown!

"Whist, will ye!" said Nan. "It's Tibbie from Tobereevil."

Then the house-mother crossed herself and went out to meet the guest, expecting some new message of cruelty from the landlord. But Tibbie had been busy manufacturing a smile, as she climbed up the mountain all the way from her own door. And she now hung out her smile, which, though a little pinched and darkling, was the best she could produce.

"Och, och! I'm tired wid yer mountains," said Tibbie. "An' I ax parding, Mrs. Kearney, for lookin' the faviour of a sate to dhraw my breath. I'm sarchin' wid anxiety for that poor foolish boy o' mine, an' I thought I knowed where to look for him whin I took the road to yer house."

"Oh, ay!" said the house-mother, ready to laugh with relief, finding that only Con was demanded of her instead of an extra pound of rent. "'Deed it's little out o' this he's been since the night he hurt his foot, an' young Misther Finiston hissel' carried him here to us on his shouldhers."

"Anan!" said Tibbie. "An' who is young Misther Finiston?"

"Yer masther's nephew, Misther Paul, an' no other," said Mrs. Kearney, who was not very sorry to see the old woman's chagrin. "An' a gran', an' a kind, an' a beautiful young gintleman he is; and the fine man to be over us some day, plase the Lord! But come in an' take a rest to yersel' an' an air o' the fire; an' if ye'll ate a couple o' pratees, I'll have them roasted in a crack!"

Tibbie smothered her wrath and went into the Kearneys' cabin, and did not go down the mountain again till she was assured that her enemy was indeed in the country as she had heard, and that he had been recognised among the people as the miser's heir.

CHAPTER XXIV. THE BLACK CAT MAKES A SPRING.

Now the great desire of Tibbie's soul was, that the agent should at once make his appearance at Tobereevil. A bold move must be made, and ignorant Tibbie had already done everything in her cause that her unaided powers could do. She could devise new plans even now in her brain, but she needed the lawyer's help to carry them out. Tibbie, who could neither read nor write, stood at the mercy of Fate. She might chafe in her wretched kitchen till her fury amounted to madness, but beyond the reach of her own voice this creature could make no sign. All Tibbie's hope was this: that the wind might blow a great storm, and tear up many trees by the roots, so that Simon should have to write to his agent to come and look to the timber. If the Wicked Woods refused to help her, then was she surely lost indeed. But just at this time the winds were lighter than usual, and the trees stood safe.

Tibbie desisted a little from railing at her master, and unable to stay within doors from impatience, went out into the woods and mumbled her threats and desires to the grim oaks. She puffed her puny breath into the face of the grey heavens, and waved her lean arms, and called on the winds to get up and bestir themselves. Con, who had unwillingly, and through fear, accompanied her from the mountain, sat in the branches above her, and grinned at her wrath, and pelted her with acorns. At last the storm answered her challenge, and came down with fury.

Simon had heard many a storm, but he shuddered at this one. The old house shook and groaned, pieces of its roof fell in, and some of its walls were broken. Down came scores of the trees, crashing and creaking, and making a thunder of their own amidst the noise that was abroad. Tibbie croaked for joy when she saw the fallen giants lying prone in the thickets, and she purred over Con as he set off for the nearest posting village with Simon's letter to the agent. The agent grumbled to himself as he obeyed the summons, for Tobereevil was not a pleasant place on a winter's day.

Arriving there, however, he got such a welcome as he had never got before. Tibbie, to propitiate him, had prepared a room for him in the under-ground story, in a part of the house which was quite out of the way of old Simon's tottering steps. Here she had built a roaring fire to keep out the cold, and served up a fine roasted pullet, which she had procured with some difficulty from a neighbouring farm. Here, too, she laid her plan before the lawyer: which was to draw up a will as he and she should please, and procure Simon's signature to it on pretence that it was a writ of ejectment for one of his tenants, for whose holding the lawyer had found a better tenant. Simon must be got to sign the paper without reading its contents. The plan was a daring one, but was pronounced worth the trial.

So the agent made out the will. At one time Tibbie wrangled with him over the share which was to be the price of the lawyer's service, but her greediness was soon silenced, and she was forced to listen to reason. Next morning the agent strolled out to look at the fallen trees, and to pick up some simple peasants who should act as witnesses to the will.

Now it chanced that Mrs. Kearney's "soft gossoons" were hanging about the woods in hope of a job at the agent's hands. They had not gone up to the door and asked to be hired to help with the timber, for they knew, had they made so bold, that their suit must have been denied. So they lingered about the wood, and when the agent chanced to meet them he found them useful. They were set to work all day at getting the timber carried to carts upon the road; their wages to be the faggots which they could pick up when all was done. And even those wicked faggots were precious in the winter time; though people would say that they brought no good to a hearth; though evil sparks did fly out of them while they burned, and strange visions loomed forth out of the white clouds of their smoke as it curled in sinister wreaths up the chimney. Towards evening pretty Nan came down the mountain, with her yellow locks blowing on the wind, carrying a little can of buttermilk and two tin mugs, and attended by Con, who danced on before her, bearing a large wooden dish of cooked potatoes. And while the gossoons made a merry supper on the stump of a tree, the lawyer mused at some distance and made perfect his little plans.

This lawyer was a man who at the outset of life had declared to himself that he would make money without scruple. In his profession he had cheerfully accepted all disreputable business, and taken care to make his spoils of any prey that fell to his share. And yet somehow he had been unlucky until now. Dishonesty had not rewarded him as he had had a right to expect. At times he had even had stings of harrowing doubt, as to whether integrity might not, after all, have paid him better in the end. He lived in a country town where people's deeds are easily made known, and he knew an attorney of thorough honesty who had made a good thing of his fair name. Our agent was now past success in his own peculiar line of life, and found it too late to start afresh on any other. Thus it was with him when Tibbie's little plot found favour in his eyes. With a slice of the Tobercevil property, together with a goodly sum of money as a reward for his faithful service of many years, this hitherto luckless rogue thought he might live to call himself thrifty after all.

Who should arrive into the midst of the supper-party but Bid, the "thraveller," she having stepped down the mountain to help the gossoons to carry the faggots home. So the agent, looking about him, saw a group of persons from whom to choose the witnesses to Simon's signature of the will. He chose Bid and Nan, and accosted them very civilly, explaining that Mr. Finiston was making new arrangements for some of his tenantry; a piece of news which made them turn pale; and that he wanted two honest persons to witness the signing of some deeds.

"I won' go!" whispered Nan, plucking Bid by the corner of the cloak. "How do I know bud it's to put my mother out of her hole undher the hill?"

"Aisy, aisy, asthore!" said Bid. "It's not for the likes o' you that they'll be signin' papers at Tobercevil. When they want yer mother out o' her hole they'll put her out by the shouldher, widout the splash o' a pen an' ink. Bud they're brewin' some quare dhrink for the owld man to swally down—that's Tibbie an' the lawyer—or my name's not Bid. I seen them cosherin' wid their heads together this mornin' as I skirted through the threes here, an' they too greedy wid their talkin to see my shadow on the gravel."

"Well, my good woman, can you make up your mind to spare us ten minutes of your valuable time?" asked the lawyer, intending to be witty.

"Ay, ay!" said Bid, carelessly, "we won't disoblige a gentleman." But when his eyes were turned away she glanced at him swiftly and keenly from under the white silk fringing of her knowing, knitted brows. And she followed him to the house, holding by Nan's unwilling hand.

It was getting dusk, and quite dark in the miser's chamber, where the light was so scantily admitted. Tibbie brought in an armful of faggots, and made a brilliant blaze on the hearth, so that the whole of the gloomy room was filled with a dancing, uncertain light. Simon remonstrated, wringing his hands at the waste.

"Stop, woman! you will drive me mad with you extravagance!" he said, snatching at the half-burnt sticks.

"Anan," said Tibbie, "is it wax candles

ye want? Gi'e me money, an' I'll see about the buyin' o' them."

"Candles!" cried the miser, with a shudder, as if there had been talk of shedding his blood.

"Ay," returned Tibbie, "ye'll be wantin' some kind o' light to see to write yer name."

"Write my name!" echoed the miser.

"How am I to know, barrin' what I'm tould?" snarled Tibbie. "Yer agent tould me to have a light in the place, bekase the masther had to put his name to some papers widout delay. He *said* it was to squeeze money out o' some robber o' a tenant, bud maybe he was tellin' lies—only it's not *me* that ought to be blamed!"

Simon pricked up his ears. True, there was something to be done in the way of an ejectment; a higher price to be put upon some cabin, or piece of bog; a prospect of another bit of gold to be added to the heap. Well, well, he would put another stick upon the fire. Extravagance was, after all, pleasant when there was a reason for it, and when it did not go too far. What was keeping that man when the thing could be done at once?

"You see, sir," said the lawyer, bustling in, "I have had such a busy day of it after that timber. I think I explained to you long ago all about the necessity for this document. Sorry to give you so much trouble, but things must be properly done."

"Ay, ay!" said the old man, trying to recollect. His memory was beginning to fail him, though his sight was very keen. Well had the forgers contrived that the light should come from the hearth, so that the table on which the paper lay should be in shade.

"You read it all over the other day you remember," said the lawyer, boldly, and only opening one fold of the paper as he laid it flat on the table for the signatures.

"I did not read it," said the miser. "Not that I recollect."

"Oh, I assure you you did, sir. Your mind is so full of business that little things may escape. You'll remember by-and-bye."

The old man reflected pitifully for a moment, and then, by such feeble light as he had, scrawled his name.

"What are those figures at the door?" he cied, suddenly, as he peered through the shifting lights at two shadows in the distance.

"The witnesses," said the lawyer. "You remember I told you it was necessary to have two witnesses."

"Oh!" said Simon, relieved, and laying down his pen. "I thought, I thought——" But he stopped with this whisper; and the terror that had crossed his mind remained unconfessed.

"Now, my good woman, step forward with your young friend," said the lawyer. "Your name, if you please, and then you will make your mark."

Bid looked steadily at the lawyer for a moment, with her keen old eyes; then turned to the miser.

"Misther Finiston yer honor," she said, "afore I put my name to that paper would ye just read it out loud to me, that I may know whether my own little farm isn't in it?"

"Bid!" cried Nan, aghast. For Bid did not own a square inch of land in the world, nor a roof to cover her.

"Nonsense, woman," cried the lawyer. "Mr. Finiston, will do no such thing. Your farm! Why where is your farm, and I can tell you without the papers?"

"My own purty little farm down the valley," said cunning Bid.

"It's not in it. There's nothing about it," urged the lawyer, and put his hand on the paper, as if to prevent Simon from lifting it up. If he had not done this he might have carried his point. But the miser's irascible temper would not bear even the appearance of control.

"I will read it!" cried Simon. "You must leave this point to me, sir. I will read it if I please, and as often as I like too." He had got possession of the paper and held it to the light.

The lawyer saw that he had been too hasty. "I beg your pardon, sir," he said, "but let me entreat you not to attempt it till you have better light. We shall get a candle by-and-bye, or, better still, wait till to-morrow. Daylight costs nothing, ha, ha! In the mean time let us get on with the signatures. Your name, my dear?" to Nan.

But Simon held the paper. He looked at the lawyer's uneasy face, and a cloud of suspicion came into his wary eyes. Bid had done her work and was too wise to say more, but she edged herself in between the miser and lawyer, foreseeing that the paper might be snatched from Simon's hand. The attempt was made as the old man stooped to bring the glare of the fire-light on the sheet. The agent snatched, but Simon's grip was hard. He kept the

parchment, and slipped out of reach of the lawyer's arm on his knees before the hearth. A shriek and a curse told that the keen eyes and keen wits had mastered its contents in less than a minute. The lawyer suddenly disappeared from the room, and was soon driving along the high road, cursing his own folly, which in grasping too much had deprived him of the little advantages which he had enjoyed at Tobereevil. He at least could never show his face to the miser again.

As for Tibbie, she simply put her arms akimbo and faced her angry master.

"Hag!" he shrieked, "I'll have you hanged for this!"

"No you won't," said Tibbie. "It would cost too much money. An' besides, nobody would hurt me for sthrivin' to get the rights for my poor boy. If ye weren't so ill-hearted I wouldn't have had to take the law into my own hands. Judges an' lawyers could see that quick enough."

"Begone out of the house!" cried the miser, foaming with rage. "Never let me see your face again!"

"I'll go when I'm ready," said Tibbie. "An' that's my thanks for my long sarvice. An' there's Paul Finiston come home, pryin' about the counthry an' watchin' to come down on ye. It's little pace ye'll have when he gits next or near you, an' nobody here to purtect ye.

This was Tibbie's last hope, that dread of Paul would cow the old man's anger, and make him loth to be left alone. She had made a great mistake, however, and she quickly found it out.

"Paul Finiston," said the miser, suddenly calm. "Is Paul Finiston in the country?"

"That he is, yer honor," said Bid, stepping forward and dropping a curtsy. "An' as purty-lookin' a gintleman as ye'd meet in a day's walkin'."

Simon's wrath had subsided strangely, and he looked timorous and eager.

"You know where he is to be found?" he asked, quickly.

"I think I could find him out, yer honor," said Bid.

"Then go to him," said Simon, "and give him a message from me. I will have him here and he shall work for me. *He* never tried to trick me, nor to worry me, nor to rob me!"

He seized the pen beside him, and scribbled some words on a scrap of paper. The paper he gave to Bid.

"Send the first person you meet for the police," he said, with a scowl at Tibbie. The gossoons who were listening in the hall set up a cheer at these words, and set off as volunteers on this mission. Then, and only then, did Tibbie lift up her voice and howl as one baffled and undone. She hurried away to hide herself, and the messengers departed. And Simon double-locked his door and barricaded his windows, and sat all night long on the watch with his pistols by his side.

LOST EXPLORERS.

THE LOST SOON FOUND.

THE expedition so properly, and, as some think, so tardily sent out in search of Doctor Livingstone, reminds us how many of our best travellers have lost their lives under circumstances which long remained unknown. Not that many amongst us believe in such a fate for the heroic Livingstone; most of us assert that he is, must be, shall be, still living; the indomitable faith on this point entertained by the late Sir Roderick Impey Murchison is widely felt. True, Livingstone has been away from us just six years, in an almost unknown part of Africa; and we know that more than five years ago he described himself as being, through hunger and fatigue, "a mere ruckle of bones;" but still we have heard from him, or rather of him, occasionally, since; and experienced geographers can name a spot where they believe him to be at this moment. A few brief sketches will show how many explorers, on the other hand, have sunk under their privations; their fate being ascertained very soon, or after a long interval, or not at all.

The boys' favourite—everybody's favourite—Captain Cook, rendered a famous amount of good service before his lamentable death. Beginning with the year 1768, he made three distinct and very lengthened voyages of discovery to the vast Pacific Ocean. His first voyage lasted till 1771, and the narrative describing it was drawn up by Doctor Hawkesworth. In 1772, he started off on his second voyage in the Resolution, his former ship having been the Endeavour; in about two years he circumnavigated the globe in a higher southern latitude than had ever before been attempted, and made vast additions to the knowledge before possessed of the South Pacific Ocean. He himself wrote an account of this voyage, the unpretending and manly style of which rendered the book generally acceptable. No previous commander of a ship

had preserved his crew's health so well as Cook had during such prolonged voyages; and his account of the methods he had followed was read with great interest by the Admiralty and by ship-owners. Once again Cook started off, and again in the Resolution, fitted out this time to bear the buffetings of the icy regions of Kamtschatka and Behring's Straits. It was in 1776 that this third voyage commenced, and many thousands of leagues were traversed before the day of his death. Cook discovered the Sandwich Islands, went northwards to Behring's Straits, reached a latitude where a compact wall of ice forbade further advance, made numerous discoveries on the north-west coast of America and the north-east coast of Asia, and again reached the Sandwich Islands, which he was destined never again to leave. His death was (if such a term may be used) most vexing; seeing that it arose wholly from a misconstruction of intentions. While anchored off Owhyhee or Hawaii, the ship often lost articles which were pilfered by natives in their frequent visits; and one fatal day, February the 21st, 1779, Cook resolved to go on shore and compel restitution. The natives put a worse interpretation on the landing of the captain and a few men, believing that he meant a war of extermination. They gradually approached in great numbers, conferred, armed themselves with spears, clubs, and daggers, and a defensive armour of mats. Cook, uneasy at the hostile manifestion, soon returned to the beach, but before he could step into the boat, he was struck by a stone thrown by a native. Cook knocked the fellow down with a musket; and then an affray began. The boat's crew fired on the natives, but were gradually driven into the water and into the boat, leaving the captain alone on the beach. Before Cook could reach the edge of the water, a native struck him on the back of the head with a club; he staggered, fell on his hand and one knee, and dropped his musket. Another native now stabbed him in the neck with a dagger; he fell into a pool of water, and looked yearningly for some aid from the boat-party, who, unfortunately, were unable to render it. Another tremendous blow from a club put an end to his existence; after which the natives mangled and mutilated the body in a shocking manner. Some fragments of his poor remains were afterwards mournfully consigned to the deep, with such simple ceremonial as was practicable. Thus died the brave and clever Captain James Cook. The Sandwich Islanders earned for themselves a long-enduring reputation for bloodthirsty cruelty, not in accordance with their known general habits.

The missionaries, who have so bravely borne up against hunger, exhaustion, disease, and every form of privation, in the fulfilment of the duties which they have undertaken, have their own group of narratives to tell, concerning the death of earnest-hearted men at the scene of their labours. One of the best of these was John Williams, who in 1816 entered the service of the London Missionary Society. He went out to the Society Islands, where he soon learned to talk with the natives in their own language. Then he voyaged to the Hervey Islands, where he went through the surprising work of translating the whole of the New Testament into the Raratonga language—till then quite unknown to Europeans; and he prepared books in the same language for teaching in schools which he established. He returned to England after sixteen years' absence, and was received with the warm welcome which he deserved. Williams strikingly showed, as Livingstone has shown more recently, how much the value of a missionary is increased if he be a skilful man in any of the practical arts of life. Livingstone was a piecer in a Lanarkshire cotton factory when a boy; an occupation which made him familiar with the appearance and action of machinery; while in later years he picked up some acquaintance with Latin and Greek at an evening school; acquired a fair knowledge of remedies for bodily ailment by attending a course of medical lectures at Edinburgh University; and fitted himself for such surveying and astronomical operations as are necessary for fixing the geographical positions of newly discovered places. How this knowledge has increased the value of Livingstone's labours is known to those who have paid any attention to his works. But mechanical skill is also full of importance to a missionary, as Williams well showed. In early life he was apprenticed to an ironmonger, and obtained an extensive knowledge of the mechanical arts. His success at the Society Islands was greatly due to the appreciation by the natives of the practical value of his skill. Wishing, some years afterwards, to return from the island of Raratonga to that of Raiatea, and finding no vessel or boat available, he built one

with his own hands. He first made the tools, and then shaped timbers to his need; he built a vessel sixty feet long by eighteen feet wide, secured the seams with oakum of banana stumps and cocoa-nut husks, made sails of native matting, and cordage of the bark of the hibiscus. So seaworthy was this little craft, that it served him during four years' voyages between and among the various groups of islands in the vast Pacific, then more usually known as the South Seas. Poor Williams! He was one of those whose fate it was to "die in harness," to fall in the midst of his work; but it is sad that such a man should die such a death. In November, 1839, when out on a second expedition, he visited Erromanga, one of the New Hebrides; there he was murdered by the natives, and his body in greater part eaten.

Adolph Schlagintweit was one of those who have lost their lives in Asiatic exploration. Three hardy brothers, Adolph, Hermann, and Robert Schlagintweit, left their homes in Bavaria in 1854, to explore almost unknown regions north of the Himalayas. Taking Egypt by the way, they visited many parts of India; worked their way northward; explored Sikhim, Bhotan, and Assam; penetrated into Ladakh, Cashmere, and Baltistan; and reached the Kuenluen Mountains. Adolph, hoping to do what no one else had up to that time effected, started off to cross the mountain barrier between the Indian, Chinese, and Russian dominions. He was never again seen by a white man. The truth was afterwards known that he had been murdered in August, 1857, at Kashgar, by a ruthless chieftain named Waller Khan.

Captain Clapperton, Major Laing, and Richard Lander perished while endeavouring to solve the mystery of the Niger. Clapperton, accompanied by Major Denham and Doctor Oudeney, started in 1822 from Tripoli, crossed the Great Desert of Sahara, entered the kingdom of Bornou, and discovered the finest sheet of water in Africa, Lake Tchad; but they failed to hit the Niger by this route. Clapperton and Denham returned safely after three years' wanderings; Oudeney perished through disease and privation. Clapperton, not many months afterwards, resolved to attack the problem from the west coast, starting from the Gulf of Guinea. The party comprised many explorers, all of whom gradually perished, except Clapperton and his servant Richard Lander. These two intrepid men reached, by an entirely new route, one point of the Niger. The privations were so varied and incessant that Clapperton, sinking under them, died in the arms of his faithful servant on the 13th of April, 1827. Richard Lander made his way back alone to the coast, with a firmness, endurance, and intelligence that gained for him well-earned renown. Meanwhile, Major Laing, another explorer, crossed the desert from Tripoli; but on his way he was attacked by a band of wild Tuaricks, and prostrated by no less than twenty-four wounds. Wonderful to relate, he recovered, although many portions of broken bone had to be removed from his head. He reached Timbuctoo, but was murdered soon after quitting it; and no papers came to light to show how far or how much he had contributed to the discovery of new regions. Richard Lander and his brother John were aided in an expedition to finish the work which Clapperton had begun. They started from the Guinea Coast in 1830, followed Clapperton's route to the Niger, and, to their infinite credit, they persevered against all obstacles until they traced the great river down to its real outlet in the Gulf of Guinea. Richard Lander was destined to die, as his former master had died, in the wilds of unhealthy Africa. He joined a trading expedition, fitted out from Liverpool in 1832, in two small steamers; but malaria destroyed four-fifths of the crews, and Lander was killed by hostile natives.

Captain Allen Gardiner was one of those who are lost for a time and then come to light only too late for the saving of life. A pious man, he combined missionary enterprise with the duties of captain of a merchant ship. At length he determined to become a missionary altogether, and to go among the Patagonians and Terra del Fuegians of South America. With six companions, two large launches, and two dingies or luggage-boats, he landed on the frigid and inhospitable shores of Terra del Fuego, on the 5th of December, 1850. No civilized man ever again saw those hapless adventurers alive. Thirteen months afterwards, Her Majesty's ship Dido landed a boat's crew at that same spot; and there they found—first, a direction rudely written on a rock; then a boat lying on the beach at the mouth of a small river; then the unburied bodies of Captain Gardiner and Mr. Maidment, a missionary who had accompanied him; then a packet of papers and books; then the shattered remains of

another boat, with part of her gear and stores, and various articles of clothing; then two more dead bodies; and lastly, the graves of the remaining three members of the party. From the documents found, it at once appeared that the enterprise had been marked by a series of mishaps throughout. Both luggage-boats were lost in a storm, with all their contents; the anchors, spars, and timbers were lost in another storm; they had left all their gunpowder behind them, and had not wherewithal to kill birds for food; one of their boats, called the Pioneer, was wholly lost in a third storm; and now they had only the Speedwell left. So far from converting to Christianity the barbarous Terra del Fuegians (who pelted and robbed them wherever they appeared), their whole time was spent in a struggle for very life. Scurvy, scanty food, and the rigours of winter told upon them slowly but surely. They were all put upon short allowance in May; in June one of the crew died of scurvy; in July a dead fox, a half-devoured fish thrown up on the beach, and six mice, were enumerated among the articles of food in store; in August two other of the crew died, and their companions went nearly mad at losing them; early in September Maidment died; about the 6th Gardiner sank under the accumulated effects of illness and starvation, after scrawling a few lines on a piece of paper; and the remaining two, Mr. Williams, a surgeon, and Pearce, a boatman, are supposed to have succumbed about the same time. Captain Moorshead of the Dido, who had called there at the earnest solicitation of Gardiner's friends in England, paid such tribute of respect as he could to the remains of the seven members of this ill-planned and ill-starred expedition.

Never did gallant men bear up more bravely against accumulated sufferings than Burke and Wills, in their journey across Australia. They were lost, but their bodies were found under very affecting circumstances. In 1860, Mr. Robert O'Hara Burke was placed in command of an expedition, to start for Melbourne, plunge into the heart of the continent, and, if possible, reach the northern coast, thereby giving additional completeness to the previous discoveries of Leichhardt, Sturt, Eyre, Mitchell, and Oxley. He had with him Mr. William John Wills, about a dozen other persons, and a good store of camels, horses, instruments, provisions, and camp baggage. Mishaps befel them from the beginning. A quarrel arose; most of the men returned to Melbourne, taking many of the stores with them. The remaining four, Burke, Wills, King, and Grey, pushed onward, with one horse, six camels, and three months' provisions. They missed two or three supply parties, which were to have been ready at certain spots reached from the east coast at Sydney, and were thus driven to obtain food as best they could after their store was exhausted. Grey died of privation on the way; but the other three succeeded in reaching the Gulf of Carpentaria, on the north coast. They worked their toilsome way back to a spot called Cooper's Creek—horse and camels dead, clothes ragged, provisions exhausted, strength gone. Two of them did not live to see their homes again. The authorities at Melbourne, uneasy at the long silence, and apprehensive of disaster, sent off an exploring party, in September, 1861, headed by Mr. A. W. Howitt (son of William and Mary Howitt). The explorer, having some idea that Cooper's Creek was the important locality, searched closely, and found King living with some friendly natives. The tale he had to tell was a sad one. From the preceding April, the three men had been living most precariously, being too utterly exhausted in strength to push on from Cooper's Creek to any of the settlements. Sometimes they obtained a little coarse food from the natives; sometimes they gathered seeds of a plant called nardoo, pounded them, and baked them into cakes. One day, having seen none of the friendly natives for some time, Burke and King tried their strength in a walk to find them. They took two pounds of nardoo with them, and left a small store of it with Wills, who was too weak to accompany them. Poor Burke weakened every hour; on the second day he threw away everything he was carrying. They supped that night on some nardoo, with the welcome addition of a small bird which King shot. It was Burke's last night. The following morning he was speechless, or nearly so, and about eight he expired. King, desolate and sorrowful, gave up any further attempt to search for the natives; he looked out for nardoo and birds, husbanded his strength, and returned to the place where Wills had been left. Here another sorrow awaited him. "I found him," he says in his narrative, "lying dead in his gunyah (a rude sort of hut), and the natives had been there and taken away

some of his clothes. I buried the corpse in sand, and remained there some days; but finding that my stock of nardoo was running short, and being unable to gather it, I tracked the natives who had been to the camp by their footprints, and went some distance down the creek, shooting crows and rooks on the road. The natives, hearing the report of the gun, came to meet me, and took me with them to their camp, giving me nardoo and fish. They took the birds I had shot, cooked them for me, and afterwards showed me a gunyah where I was to sleep with three of the single men. The following morning they began talking to me; putting one finger on the ground and covering it with sand, at the same time pointing up the creek, saying, 'White fellow!' which I understood to mean, one white man was dead. They then asked me where the third white man was, and I made the sign of putting two fingers on the ground and covering them with sand." And so King remained with these kindly aborigines (savages we sometimes call them!) till Howitt's party arrived.

These are some of the best known cases of lost explorers whose fate was not long in doubt. The long-lost, those whose deaths were not known for a long series of years, or are even still unknown, form a group which must be treated separately.

CUBAN BEGGARS.

THAT apparently hapless mendicant shuffling along the white, heated road of a narrow street, is a blind negro, with the imposing nickname of Cara Catambungo. He is attired in a clean suit of brown holland, and he wears a broad-brimmed panama. His flat, splay feet are bare, exhibiting where one of his toes has been consumed by a nigua, a troublesome insect which introduces itself into the foot, and, if not eradicated in time, remains there to vegetate. Across his shoulders is slung a huge canvas bag for depositing comestible alms, and in his hand is a long rustic staff. Charity with a Cuban is a leading principle of his religion, and to relieve the indigent —no matter whether the object for relief be worthy or not—is next in importance to disburdening the mind to a father-confessor. Mindful of the native weakness in this respect, Cara Catambungo bears his sorrows from door to door, confident that his affliction and his damaged foot will command pity whithersoever he wanders. But he is impudent, and a boisterous, swaggering fellow. Hear him as he demands compassion, with his swarthy, fat face upturned to the blazing sun, and with a long cigar between his bulging lips.

"Ave Maria! here's the poor blind man; poor fellow! Give him a medio (a threepenny-piece) somebody. Does nobody hear him, el pobrecito? Come, make haste! Don't keep the poor fellow waiting. Poor Cara Catambungo! He is stone blind, poor fellow, and his feet are blistered and sore. Misericordia, señores. Barajo! why don't somebody answer? Which is mi s'ñora Mercedes' house? Will somebody lead me to it? Mi s'ñora Mercedes!"

Catambungo knows most of his patrons by name. Doña Mercedes appears at her iron-grated window, through the bars of which the benevolent lady offers a silver coin and a small loaf.

"Gracias mi s'ñora; Dios se la pague su merced! (May Heaven reward your worship.) Who's got a light for the poor ciego?"

Somebody favours the ciego with a light, and Cara Catumbungo goes on his way smoking and humming a tune, and presently harangues in another street.

Will it be believed that this wanderer has a farm in the country, with slaves in his employ, and hundreds of dollars in his exchequer? When not on beggar-beat, Catambungo retires to his possessions, where he lives luxuriously. Like some of his begging fraternity, the negro occasionally varies his mendicant trade by offering for sale lottery-tickets bearing what he calls "lucky numbers." The Havannah lottery is a great institution in Cuba, and has an extraordinary fascination for rich as well as poor. Each ticket costs seventeen dollars, and is printed in such a form as to be susceptible of division into seventeen parts, so as to suit all pockets. The prizes vary from one hundred to one hundred thousand dollars, and there are two "sorteos," or draws, monthly. Our friend Catambungo often invests in fragments of unsold tickets, and on one occasion he drew a prize to the value of seven hundred dollars, which good luck, together with his beggar savings, enabled him to purchase a farm and to hire a few labourers to work it with. Whether from habit or from love of gain, Catambungo never forsook his favourite vocation, but continued to bear his sorrows from door to door, as if they still belonged to him.

In Cuba, at least, beggars may be said to be choosers. Saturday is the day which they prefer for transacting their business, because it precedes Sunday, when the faithful attend high mass in the church, and go to confess. Except on Saturday, and on some festive occasions, it is a rare event for a beggar to be seen asking alms in the public streets.

Every Saturday morning I pay my respects to Don Benigno and his amiable señora, Mercedes, who, like most of their hospitable neighbours, keep open house in more than one way: the huge doors of their habitation being ajar at all hours. As I sit chatting with my worthy hostess, the street door—which has direct communication with the reception room—is boldly thrown open, and a white lady, attired in well-starched muslin, and adorned with jewels, enters. I rise, in accordance with the polite custom of the country, while Don Benigno offers the visitor a rocking-chair. The conversation proceeds on subjects of general interest, in which the visitor joins. Curiously, I am never introduced to the lady in muslin; but the unusual behaviour of my host is soon accounted for. After a few minutes the stranger señora rises, and approaching Doña Mercedes, offers her hand. Doña Mercedes does not take the proffered palm, but simply places upon it a piece of silver coin of the value of a franc.

"May Heaven reward you," says the lady-beggar, and takes her gift and her leave without another word.

Something like a Beggars' Opera may be realised whilst sitting before Don Benigno's huge window on Saturday morning, and watching the thriftless performers as they pass. The entertainment "opens" at the early hour of six A.M.; from that time till the Cuban breakfast-hour of eleven, we are treated with begging solos only: mendicants who stand and deliver monologues like Cara Catambungo or Muñekon—an equally popular beggar. Sometimes the applicant for charity announces himself with a bold bang on the door, followed by the pious ejaculation, "Ave Maria!" The lame, or otherwise afflicted, are content with simply directing attention to their misfortune, while the less "favoured" attract public regard by humming a wild air, to which a gibberish libretto is attached, or by descanting upon social and political matters. The ill-paved condition of the Cuban streets, the inefficient supply of water, the bad lighting of the town at night, the total absence of anything like proper drainage, are favourite topics with these open-air orators.

Our Beggars' Opera concludes with a brilliant chorus of mendicants, who, at twelve o'clock, visit their patrons in large companies. At that hour, one of Don Benigno's slaves enters with a large flat basket containing a quantity of small two-penny loaves, which the negro places upon the marble floor in front of the open door. Soon a crowd of beggars of all shades and castes, who, during the last half-hour, have been squatting in a row under the broad shade of the opposite houses, approach, and, without bidding, help to empty the capacious bread-basket. Further up the street they go picking up more crumbs at rich mansions, whose owners occasionally vary their entertainment by providing for their vagrant visitors a little ajiaco, or native soup.

Cuban people are not fond of bestowing their charity through the medium of a public institution. The only place of the kind in that part of Cuba which I am describing is called the Beneficencia, or almshouse, which is under the superintendence of the Sisters of Charity. Wealthy ladies contribute largely towards the support of this establishment, but, in order to provide funds, public raffles are indispensable. Nothing succeeds in Cuba so well as something in which chance or luck, combined with amusement, is the inducement of the venture, and a raffle in aid of funds for the famished is always popular.

Doña Mercedes, the most benevolent of ladies, tells me that she and the prosperous señoras already referred to have in project a grand bazaar for the benefit of the poor, to which everybody is expected to contribute. The articles received for the purposes of the bazaar are to be exhibited in one of the big saloons of the governor's house, which overlooks the Plaza de Armas, and they will be raffled for during three special evenings. For weeks Doña Mercedes and her charitable sisters are busy collecting and numbering the contributions as they arrive, or twisting the paper chances into the form of cigar-lights.

The military square presents an animated scene on the evenings of the raffle. Twelve tables, bearing rich cloths and silver candelabra, are distributed about the broad promenade of the plaza. Around each table are seated a score of the fairest of Cuba's daughters, elegantly attired in evening costume, without any head-covering, and

with only a scarf or shawl lightly protecting their fair shoulders. Doña Mercedes looks charming in a pink grenadine dress, and with her luxuriant black hair tastefully arranged, as a Cuban señora alone knows how. Each lady adopts her most insinuating manner in order to dispose of her twisted tickets, the greater portion of which contain, of course, blanks, or a consolatory couplet like a motto in a cracker, for the gratification of the unsuccessful purchaser. There is loud cheering when a prize is drawn, especially if it happen to be of importance, like the "grand prize," which consists of a prettily worked purse containing six golden onzas (twenty pounds sterling).

Crowds of beggars are assembled within range of the plaza, and some of them occasionally invest in a medio or peseta's worth of tickets, but as coloured people are never permitted to mix with white folk in public, their tickets are handed to them by officials appointed for that purpose. Some of those blacks are "retired" slaves: in other words, negroes who have become free, either by devoting their savings of many years to the purchase of their liberty, or by having the latter left them as a legacy by an indulgent master. Those who have ability and industry make the most of their precious gift by devoting their energies to trade or to music, for which accomplishment negroes have often a natural inclination; but the infirm or the inactive—and of these there is always a majority—are reduced to penury, in which condition they fall naturally into begging ways, and prosper accordingly.

That intelligent-looking black who craves of me a peseta in order to buy a small bundle of tickets for the raffle, is a well-known beggar. His name is Roblejo, and he owes his freedom to the publication of a book of poems written by himself. Assisted by a benevolent littérateur, Roblejo was enabled to transfer his poetic lucubrations into readable form, and the novelty taking the public fancy, subscribers were found sufficient for the purpose of printing the book, and effecting the author's emancipation.

"Holá, Don Pancho! How goes it with thee?" The individual whom I address is probably the most popular beggar in the town. His real name is Pancho Villergas, but he is commonly known as El Rey del Orden (the Order King). I have often endeavoured to secure a faithful likeness of this illustrious gentleman, but Pancho cannot be prevailed upon to sit either to an artist or to a photographer. Whenever the subject is broached by me, El Rey del Orden grins, shakes his head knowingly, and observes, in the only English with which he is conversant:

"Oh ye—s; vary vel, no good, good mornin'."

Pancho is a genuine white man, but age and exposure to the sun and wind have bronzed him to a mulatto colour. He has a picturesque Saint Francis beard, and a benign, strongly marked countenance. He wears a coat of many shaded cloths, which, buttoned up to his neck, gives him a military appearance, while it economises his linen. Upon his head is a tall beaver hat, which has seen better days, but which the Order King is careful to keep well brushed. Pancho is slightly crazed in his intellect, and his monomania consists in the belief that he is not a beggar, but a benefactor to his country. With this notion, no persuasion will induce him to accept a donation in the shape of coin. Those who are acquainted with Pancho's weakness, and are desirous of relieving his wants, must do so through the medium of stratagem. If they succeed in imposing upon El Rey del Orden by prevailing upon him to "borrow" food or raiment, they consider themselves amply rewarded for their act of charity. The only article which the King of Order will deign to accept is foolscap writing-paper, because he believes that the use to which he applies it will be beneficial to mankind in general, and to Cuba in particular. He fills his foolscap with correspondence, which he addresses to the highest authorities; the favoured recipients being his excellency the governor, the alcalde mayor, and members of the town council. Whenever any political or social question is raised, the Order King is sure to despatch an important document bearing his opinion and advice. His majesty is usually his own letter-carrier, unless he can meet with a trustworthy messenger in the shape of a priest, an officer, or a policeman. The matter contained in these momentous memorials occupies from eighteen to twenty closely-written sheets, and is always prefaced with the imposing heading: "Yo, el Rey" (I, the king).

Pancho's indigence and infatuation have a romantic origin. This old, shabby-looking object before me was at one time a well-to-do planter, and held a high position among merchants. One fatal day he became enamoured of a Creole coquette, who

cruelly jilted him. The disappointment turned his brain. People attributed his harmless insanity to eccentricity, and merchants transacted business with him as of old, till one heartless scoundrel, taking advantage of his misfortune, swindled him out of a large sum of money, and this deed eventually led to Pancho's insolvency and utter ruin.

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

"THE BOSTON MASSACRE."

THE natural discontent produced in America by the unwise Stamp Act passed in 1765, culminated in 1775 by the breaking out at Lexington of the War of Independence. But the first blood actually shed in the lamentable conflict was in March, 1770, when an affray took place between the English soldiers and the colonists, which American historians have ever since dignified with the title of the "Boston Massacre." The very full details of this collision, contained in an official report transmitted to the Duke of Richmond, Benjamin Franklin, and various members of the English Opposition, enable us to give a very graphic picture of colonial life at the time of the outbreak of the war, and to show very minutely the state of irritation that then prevailed in New England.

The repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766 was unfortunately followed by measures that still more aggravated the oppressed colonists. In 1767, five commissioners were therefore sent out to Boston under the pretence of relieving and encouraging American commerce, but really to aid the local government to repress all opposition. The commissioners, eager to gratify the ministers at home, at once threw themselves on the side of Governor Bernard, and began by dismissing from office a member of the local parliament who opposed their views. The difficulty of access to them, and their arrogant behaviour, made the five commissioners still more obnoxious to the people. In October, 1766, at the representation of these intruders, the home government sent out four regiments, which were landed under cover of the cannon of several vessels of war lying in the harbour with springs on their cables, and guns loaded, ready to open on the town in case of resistance. The soldiers landed without molestation, and yet marched on to the common with muskets charged, bayonets fixed, and drums beating, as if taking possession of a conquered town. One of these regiments was posted in Castle William (afterwards Fort Independence), on Castle Island, nearly three miles south-east of Boston. On the arrival of these troops the commissioners, who had retired for several months to the castle, returned to the town, as if no longer afraid of open violence.

The men of Boston quickly chafed under these restraints, and complained that troops had been forced upon them contrary to the spirit of Magna Charta and the letter of the Bill of Rights, which forbids the raising a standing army in times of peace without the consent of parliament, and, above all, in the very face of an Act of Parliament against the quartering of troops in America.

Unconscious of the powder magazine on which they stood, the commissioners, backed up by the troops, now treated matters with a high hand. Governor Bernard, without consulting the council, gave up the State House to the troops, who at once occupied the Merchants' Exchange on the lower floor, and the various chambers where the representatives of the province and the courts of law held their meetings. The council chamber alone was left to the aggrieved citizens. The governor, also, by every means but force, endeavoured to occupy an old manufactory (the site of Hamilton-place), belonging to the province, as a barrack. He besieged it with soldiers, who maltreated the occupants, but did not obtain possession, owing to the resolute resistance of the keeper. Greatest insult of all, he posted a main guard, with two field-pieces, only twelve yards from the State House, as if to overawe the local legislature. The general court, highly resenting this open attempt at intimidation, refused to sit, and were in consequence adjourned to Cambridge (the well-known suburb), to the inconvenience of many members. Respectable inhabitants were vexed and insulted by the repeated challenging of insolent sentinels posted in all parts of the town at the doors of officers' lodgings. Captain Wilson, of the Eighty-ninth, had, it was generally reported, excited negroes to join his regiment and desert their masters, and, as some said, urged them to cut their masters' throats and steal their property; but this was, no doubt, exaggeration. Further irritation, however, was produced by several magistrates being attacked by parties of soldiers, by the rescue of riotous men from the peace officers, by a musket being fired in the

streets, and by frequent wounds received by citizens in scuffles with the strangers.

Matters could not long continue in this way. Rough words preceded rough blows, and Boston men were not the sort of people to be cowed by the sight of a red coat, a cooked-hat, or a bayonet. On the 22nd of February, 1770, some boys appeared in the streets carrying coarsely painted caricatures of the obnoxious, and, as they were generally considered, unpatriotic importers of British goods. A Custom House informer passing by endeavoured to prevail on a countryman to destroy the boy's pictures. The man refusing, the informer attempted himself to tear them down. A mob soon collected. The informer, getting violent, threatened to prosecute some of the citizens who abused him, but the boys hustled him, and followed him to his house with laughter and reproaches. Angry and alarmed, the moment he reached home he snatched up a gun and threatened the lads, who, nothing scared, still pelted the house with snow-balls and stones. The informer, frantic with rage, then fired from one of the windows, and a poor boy of eleven fell dead on the pavement below. A great excitement was produced among the people by this wanton act, and the funeral of "the young martyr in the cause of liberty," as he was called, was attended by an immense concourse of inhabitants.

On Friday, the 2nd of March, 1770, a swaggering soldier of the Twenty-ninth Regiment, armed with a club, came to Mr. John Gray's rope-walks, and, looking into one of the windows of the long shed, called out to a man named Feriter:

"By —— I'll have satisfaction; d—— me, I'm not afraid of any one in the rope-walks!"

Feriter, instantly stepping out of the window, knocked up the bully's heels, and his coat flying open in falling, a naked sword appeared, which a rope-maker, named Wilson, carried off as legitimate spoil. Soon after, the man, with eight or ten comrades, returned blustering to the warehouse, and challenged all the rope-makers to come out and fight. The warehousemen passing the word for all the hands to come up, thirteen or fourteen men, with their wouldring-sticks, soon came running, and beat off the soldiers. In a few minutes thirty or forty more red-coats, armed with clubs and cutlasses, came rushing from Green's Barracks, headed by a tall negro drummer, with a cutlass chained to his waist. A constable named Hill, standing at a door in a passage leading from Atkinson-street, called out to the gigantic drummer, "You black rascal, what have you to do with white people's quarrels?"

On which the drummer replied, "I suppose I may look on."

Soon after this negro cut Feriter over the head with his cutlass. Hill, interfering to save a rope-maker, who was down, and being beaten with clubs by two or three soldiers, was himself struck at. Then came a rush of more rope-makers, and the soldiers were again driven back down the passage by the tar-kettles.

The next day the soldiers were seen busy in the barracks shaping clubs, and a party of them went to M'Neill's rope-walk, challenged the workmen, and struck several of them, but were soon driven away. On the Monday morning Colonel Carr and some officers forced their way into Gray's rope-walk, declaring they were searching for a sergeant of their regiment, who had been murdered. On Mr. Gray complaining of this, Colonel Carr told him he was daily losing his men, that three grenadiers had been beaten by the rope-makers, and that one of them was dying.

From many hints of the soldiers, the Boston people began to foresee riot coming. On the next Sunday evening a soldier called on Mr. Charles Thayer, a carpenter, and said to Miss Thayer: "Your brother is a man I have drank with, and have a great regard for, and I came here to desire him to keep out of harm's way, as before Tuesday night at twelve there will be a great deal of blood shed, and many lives lost."

A man named Broaders the same evening heard a Sergeant Daniels say in conversation: "The soldiers won't bear the affronts of the inhabitants any longer, but resent them, and make them know their distance. I'd like to make the plumbs fly about their ears, and set the town on fire round them, and they'd know who and who were of a side."

About the same time a soldier named Rumbly was heard swearing in Boston to his comrades.

"If there's any fuss," he cried, over his cups, "the grenadier company will march up King-street, and if any of the inhabitants join the mob the women will be sent to the castle. I've been in many a battle, and I don't know but I shan't be in one here; and if I am I shall level my piece so as not to miss, for the blood will soon run in the streets of Boston."

On which a brutal soldier's wife said, "If there is a riot in the town, and any of the people are wounded, I'll put a stone in my handkerchief and beat their brains out, and plunder the rebels."

Another day four soldiers, walking between the market and Justice Quincey's, were heard saying: "There are a great many that will eat their dinners on Monday next that will not eat any on Tuesday."

An officer's servant on the Monday morning was heard from an open window to say that "he hoped he should see blood enough spilt before morning." A man named Adams going to the house of Corporal Pershall, of the Twenty-ninth Regiment, near Quaker-lane (now Congress-street), was desired, with great earnestness by the corporal, to go home as soon as possible to his master's house, and not venture abroad that night, for that the soldiers were determined to be revenged on the rope-walk people, and much mischief would be done.

It was evident that the soldiers were determined to drive the citizens to retaliation, and then to take a cruel and desperate revenge. About nine o'clock on Monday, the 5th of March, large parties of riotous soldiers came pouring out of Murray's Barracks in Brattle-street (the site of the City Tavern) armed with large naked cutlasses, and, on some boys shouting, began cutting and slashing at everybody that came in their way, and also stabbed at several inoffensive persons with their bayonets. A sailor named Atwood, of Wellfleet, seeing this, went up to a party of the ruffianly soldiers and asked them if they intended to murder people.

"Yes, by ——," they cried, "root and branch—here is one of them." At the same time three of the soldiers struck the man with clubs, and partly disabled him. A few steps off, meeting two officers, Atwood said, "Gentlemen, what is the matter?"

They replied, "You will see by-and-bye." Soon after he heard a cry at an officer's door, "Turn out the guards!" and the soldiers were shouting, "Where are the —— cowards! where are your liberty boys!"

Two officers came out of Murray's Barracks as the soldiers were rushing through Boylston's-alley into Cornhill, and said to the men, "My lads, come into the barracks, and do not hurt the inhabitants." But the moment the two officers had retired into the mess-house a hot-headed young ensign ran to the barrack gate and called to the maddened men, "Turn out, and I'll stand by you. Kill them, stick them, knock them down, run your bayonets through them."

The officers came out, and again interfered, but again the ensign led the men forth, sword in hand. Soon after, a party of soldiers came rushing from Green's Barracks in Atkinson-street, crying, "This is our chance," and seemed so greedy for blood, that the sergeants could hardly keep them in their ranks. A citizen telling a soldier, who was flourishing a cutlass in an alley that led from Cornhill to Brattle-street, that it "wasn't clever to carry such a weapon in the night without it was in a scabbard," the ruffian swore at him, thrust his cutlass at a young man near, and struck at him. Some lads then collecting at a halloo from near the Town House, drove back the clump of soldiers to the barracks. A few moments after, however, more of the English poured out with cutlasses, clubs, tongs, bayonets, and shovels, crying, "Where are the —— Yankees!" One of the soldiers being knocked down by a citizen whom he threatened, struck the man, and broke his wrist. Near the Liberty Tree, also, several citizens were hustled and struck by the soldiers. A citizen named Appleton, standing at his own door in Cornhill talking with Deacon Marsh, with difficulty saved himself and friend from the soldiers' cutlasses. Soon after, Appleton's son, a boy of twelve, came running in, pale and scared, and said that he had just met some soldiers with drawn cutlasses. One of them struck at him, upon which he cried, "Pray, soldier, save my life." The soldier replied, "No, —— you! I will kill you all," and struck him down; but providentially the sword glanced on the boy's arm, and he was only bruised.

A serious conflict between the soldiers and the people was now inevitable, and it soon took place. An apprentice named Broaders, on his way with a barber's lad to an apothecary's, began talking to the sentinel at the Custom House steps. The barber's boy called out to the soldier that a captain of the Fourteenth, then passing, was so mean a fellow as not to pay his barber for shaving him. Upon this the sentry, in a rage, left his post, and following the boy into the middle of the street, told him to show him his face. The boy replied saucily, "I am not afraid to show my face to any man." Upon this the sentry gave him a sweeping blow on the

head with his musket, which made him reel, stagger, and scream. Broaders, enraged at this cruelty, asked the sentry what he meant by this. The soldier replied, "Your blood; if you don't get out of the way, I will give you something." And then fixing his bayonet, made a drive at the lads, who both ran away. A crowd presently collected, and more soldiers came running up. Thirty or forty boys and youngsters then assembled round the Custom House, gave three cheers, began to throw snow-balls at the sentinel, and told him to fire if he dare. The sentinel then went up the steps of the Custom House, loaded his piece, and first striking the butt of it on the steps, presented it several times at the people, who were now only about ten feet off. A man named Knox, who had crossed from the Royal Exchange to Quaker-lane, seeing the sentry snap his piece, told him if he fired he would be killed. The sentry growled out that he did not care, and if any one touched him he would fire. The boys shouted again, "Fire and be ——" In the mean time the fire-bell had begun to ring, and was rousing the mob who had been fighting with the soldiers near Justice Quincey's. The crowd then drawing nearer the sentinel, he knocked at the Custom House door, and spoke to a servant who came out without a hat, his hair tied and hanging down loose.

The last fatal act of the tragedy was fast approaching. In about five minutes a party of seven or eight soldiers, headed by a Captain Preston, came from the main guard directly through the crowd with loaded muskets and fixed bayonets, pushing roughly to and fro, and shouting, "Make way!" When they got abreast of the Custom House they drew up in a line from the corner of the Royal Exchange-lane to the sentry-box at the Custom House door. At this crisis Knox took Captain Preston by the coat, and begged him for God's sake to take his men back again, for if the men fired, his (Preston's) life would have to answer for the consequences. The captain replied he knew what he was about, and seemed agitated. There were only about seventy or eighty people then, who were throwing snow-balls, shouting, whistling boatswain's calls, and waving sticks. The soldiers struck some of the citizens with the butt-ends of their muskets, upon which an officer cried out, "Why don't you prick the beasts!" The most graphic view of the sad sequel of this affray may, however, be given by the evidence of two or three of the bystanders, afterwards taken down by the Boston justices.

William Wyat, of Salem, coaster, deposed: "Then the said officer retired from before the soldiers, and, stepping behind them, towards the right wing, bid the soldiers fire; they not firing, he presently again bid 'em fire. Then the second man on the left wing fired off his gun; then, after a very short pause, they fired one after another, as quick as possible, beginning on the right wing; the last man's gun on the left wing flashed in the pan; then he primed again, and the people being withdrawn from before the soldiers, most of them further down the street, he turned his gun toward them, and fired upon them. Immediately after the principal firing, I saw three of the people fall down in the street; presently, after the last gun was fired off, the said officer, who had commanded the soldiers (as above) to fire, sprung before them, waving his sword or stick, said, 'Damn ye, rascals! what did ye fire for?' and struck up the gun of one of the soldiers, who was loading again, whereupon they seemed confounded, and fired no more. I then went up behind them to the right wing, where one of the people was lying, to see whether he was dead, where there were four or five people about him, one of them saying he was dead. And I remember, as the said officer was going down with the soldiers towards the Custom House, a gentleman spoke to him, and said, 'Captain Preston, for God's sake keep your men in order, and mind what you are about.' And further I say not."

A man named Hickling stood close to several of the poor fellows who were killed. His account of what he saw is very minute and apparently truthful. "At that instant Mr. Richard Palmes came up and asked the officer if he intended to fire upon the people? He answered, 'By no means.' Palmes asked if the guns were loaded? Preston answered in the affirmative. Palmes further asked, 'With powder and ball?' Preston answered they were. The soldiers during this conversation assumed different postures, shoving their bayonets frequently at the people, one in particular, pushing against my side, swore he would run me through; I laid hold of his bayonet and told him that nobody was going to meddle with them. Not more than ten seconds after this I saw something white, resembling a piece of snow or ice, fall among the soldiers, which knocked the end of a firelock to the ground. At that instant the word

'Fire!' was given, but by whom I know not, but concluded it did not come from the officer aforesaid, as I was within a yard of him, and must have heard him had he spoken it, but am satisfied said Preston did not forbid them to fire; I instantly leaped within the soldier's bayonet as I heard him cock his gun, which that moment went off between Mr. Palmes and myself. I, thinking there was nothing but powder fired, stood still, till, upon the other side of Mr. Palmes, and close to him, I saw another gun fired, and the man since called Attucks fall. I then withdrew about two or three yards, and, turning, saw Mr. Palmes upon his knee, and the soldiers pushing at him with their bayonets. During this the rest of the guns were fired, one after another, when I saw two more fall. I ran to one, and seeing the blood gush out of his head, though just expiring, I felt for the wound, and found a hole as big as my hand. This I have since learned was Mr. Gray. I then went to Attucks, and found him gasping, pulled his head out of the gutter, and left him; I returned to the soldiers, and asked them what they thought of themselves, and whether they did not deserve to be cut to pieces, to lay men wallowing in their blood in such a manner? They answered, 'Damn them! they should have stood out of our way.' The soldiers were then loading their muskets, and told me upon my peril not to come any nearer to them. I further declare that I heard no other affront given them than the huzzaing and whistling of boys in the street."

A citizen named Marshall gives a view of the scene from a different point of perspective. He says: "On Monday night, the 5th of March, four or five minutes after nine o'clock, coming from Colonel Jackson's house in Dock-square, to my house in King-street, next door to the Custom House, I saw no person in the street but the sentinel at the Custom House, in perfect peace. After I had been in my house ten or twelve minutes, being in my shop in the front of the house, I heard the cry of murder at a distance, on which I opened the door, but saw no person in the street; but in half a minute I saw several persons rushing out from the main guard-house. They came down as far as the corner of Mr. Philip's house; I saw their swords and bayonets glitter in the moonlight; at which time I was called into the house by one of my family, but returned again in half a minute, and saw ten or twelve soldiers, in a tumultuous manner, in the middle of King-street, opposite to Royal Exchange-lane, flourishing their arms, and saying, 'Damn them, where are they,' and crying 'Fire;' the bells then rang as for fire; I was then called in again for half a minute, and returning again to the door, the inhabitants began to collect. Soon after a party of soldiers came down the south side of King-street, and crossed over to the Custom House sentinel, and formed in a rank by him, nor did I see any manner of abuse offered the sentinel, and in three minutes at the farthest they began to fire on the inhabitants, by which several persons were killed, and several others were wounded. Some time after this the party marched off very leisurely, and without molestation, and presently after the main guard was drawn out in ranks between the Guard House and Town House, and was joined by the picket in the same manner, with fixed bayonets and muskets shouldered, except the front rank, who stood with charged bayonets, until the Lieutenant-Governor came up. And I do further declare, as near as I can judge, there was not more than one hundred persons in the street at the time the guns were discharged."

By this one fatal volley eleven unoffending citizens of Boston were either killed or wounded. The victims were Samuel Gray, a young rope-maker, who was killed by a ball through the head, and then bayoneted; Crispus Attucks, a mulatto, killed by two balls in the breast; James Caldwell, shot in the back. Samuel Maverick (seventeen) and Patrick Carr died soon after. Mr. Payne, a merchant, standing at his own door, was wounded, and five other persons were dangerously hurt.

Presently through the snow, which was a foot deep that fatal March night, came the English commander-in-chief to inquire into the causes of this lamentable collision. The soldiers had still their bayonets fixed, and were presenting their firelocks. His honour went round on the right flank of the Twenty-ninth Regiment, now drawn up between the State House and Main-guard House, and facing down King-street towards the crowd, and said to Captain Preston, "Sir, are you the commanding officer?" On Preston replying he was, he said, "Do you know, sir, you have no power to fire on any body of people collected together except you have a civil magistrate with you to give orders?"

Captain Preston replied, "I was obliged to to save my sentry."

On which a man in the crowd called out,

"Then you have murdered three or four men to save your sentry."

A few hours after Captain Preston and seven of the firing party were committed to jail.

The soldiers showed a cruel delight rather than any regret at this massacre. One was heard to say it was a fine thing, and the town should see more of it. The men at Green's Barracks, when the first gun was fired in King-street, shouted, "That is all we want," then ran in and armed. A doctor of the Fourteenth Regiment remarked to a citizen: "The townspeople have always used us ill, and I wish, instead of killing five or six, the men had killed five hundred. Curse me if I don't." A quarter-master of the Twenty-ninth Regiment was heard to say: "The troubles were nothing to what they will be in six months, for the affair will get home, and the people will be disarmed, as they have been in Ireland." Oh! These men little knew what stuff the colonists were made of. The very evening of the massacre many inoffensive Boston men were stopped and struck by soldiers, and the sticks they carried taken from them. One of the soldiers' witnesses swore that the people outside the Custom House, just before the fatal volley was fired, had cried, "Come out you rascals, and fight us if you dare." And that there had been a cry from a rioter, "I wish we could get into the Custom House, we would soon make the money circulate." But this was never proved, and the witness was generally confessed to be untrustworthy.

The public funeral of the victims of the "massacre" took place on the 8th of March. The shops were closed, and all the bells of Boston, as well as those of the neighbouring towns, solemnly tolled. The bodies of two of the victims (strangers) were borne from Faneuil Hall, the others from the residences of their families; the hearses meeting in King-street, near the scene of the tragedy, passed through the main street, followed by a vast throng, to the burial-ground, where their bodies were all deposited in one vault. The two regiments were at once removed to the barracks at Castle Island, and the town militia instituted a nightly military watch, to prevent the soldiers rescuing their comrades.

The alarmed commissioners never held up their heads after this melancholy affair. Mr. Robinson left for England, the others stole away under various pretexts.

The Boston people for long afterwards celebrated the anniversary of the massacre, in order, as they said, to annually develop "the fatal effects of the policy of standing armies, and the natural tendency of quartering troops in populous cities in times of peace." This anniversary was regularly observed till 1784, when the celebration was superseded by that of the 4th of July

"ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS."

It is clear that playgoers of the Shakespearian period dearly loved to see a battle represented upon the stage. The great poet thoroughly understood his public, and how to gratify it. In some fifteen of his plays he has introduced the encounter or the marshalling of hostile forces. "Alarums and excursions" is with him a very frequent stage direction; and as much may be said of "they fight," or "exeunt fighting." Combats and the clash of arms he obviously did not count as "inexplicable dumb show and noise." He was conscious, however, that the battles of the stage demanded a very large measure of faith on the part of the spectators. Of necessity they were required to "make believe" a good deal. In the prologue to Henry the Fifth, especial apology is advanced for the presumption of the dramatist in dealing with so comprehensive a subject; and indulgence is claimed for the unavoidable feebleness of the representation as compared with the force of the reality:

> But pardon, gentles all,
> The flat unraisèd spirits that have dared,
> On this unworthy scaffold, to bring forth
> So great an object. Can this cock-pit hold
> The vasty fields of France? or may we cram
> Within this wooden O the very casques
> That did affright the air at Agincourt?
> . . . . . .
> Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts,
> Into a thousand parts divide one man,
> And make imaginary puissance:
> Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them
> Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth;
> For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
> Carry them here and there; jumping o'er times;
> Turning th' accomplishment of many years
> Into an hour-glass.

These conditions, however, were accepted by the audiences of the time in the most liberal spirit. Critics were prone to deride the popular liking for "cutler's work" and "the horrid noise of target fight;" "the fools in the yard" were censured for their "gaping and gazing" at such exhibitions. But the battles of the stage were still fought on; "alarums and excursions" continued to engage the scene. Indeed, variety and stir have always been

elements in the British drama as opposed to the uniformity and repose which were characteristics of the ancient classical theatre.

Yet our early audiences must have been extremely willing to help out the illusions of the performance, and abet the tax thus levied upon their credulity. Shakespeare's battles could hardly have been very forcibly presented. In his time no "host of auxiliaries" assisted the company. "Two armies flye in," Sir Philip Sidney writes in his Apologie for Poetrie, 1595, "represented with four swords and bucklers, and what harde heart will not receive it for a pitched fielde?" So limited an array would not be deemed very impressive in these days; but it was held sufficient by the lieges of Elizabeth. Just as the Irish peasant is even now content to describe a mere squad of soldiers as "the army," so Shakespeare's audiences were willing to regard a few "blue-coated stage-keepers" as a formidable body of troops. And certainly the poet sometimes exercised to the utmost the imaginations of his patrons. He required them to believe that his small stage was immeasurably spacious; that his handful of "supers" was in truth a vast multitude. During one scene in King John he does not hesitate to bring together upon the boards the three distinct armies of Philip of France, the Archduke of Austria, and the King of England; while, in addition, the citizens of Angiers are supposed to appear upon the walls of their town and discuss the terms of its capitulation. So in King Richard the Third, Bosworth Field is represented, and the armies of Richard and Richmond are made to encamp within a few feet of each other. The ghosts of Richard's victims rise from the stage and address speeches alternately to him and to his opponent. Playgoers who can look back a score of years may remember a textual revival of the tragedy, in which this scene was exhibited in exact accordance with the original stage directions. Colley Cibber's famous acting version was for once discarded, and Richard and Richmond on the eve of their great battle quietly retired to rest in the presence of each other, and of their audience. However to be commended on the score of its fidelity to the author's intentions, the scene had assuredly its ludicrous side. The rival tents wore the aspect of opposition shower-baths. It was exceedingly difficult to humour the idea that the figures occupying the stage could neither see nor hear one another. Why, if they but outstretched their arms they could have touched each other; and they were supposed to be mutually eager for combat to the death! It became manifest, indeed, that the spectators had lost greatly their ancestors' old power of "making believe." They could no longer hold their reason in suspense for the sake of enhancing the effect of a theatrical performance, though prepared to be indulgent in that respect. What is called "realism" had invaded the stage since Shakespeare's time, and could not now be repelled or denied. Hints and suggestions did not suffice; the positive and the actual had become indispensable.

There can be no doubt, however, that Shakespeare's battles had oftentimes the important aid of real gunpowder. The armies might be small; but the noise that accompanied their movements was surely very great. The stage direction "alarums and chambers go off" occurs more than once in King Henry the Fifth. The Chorus to the play expressly states:

> Behold the ordnance on their carriages
> With fatal mouths gaping on girded Harfleur,
> . . . . . and the nimble gunner
> With linstock now the devilish cannon touches,
> And down goes all before them.

Gunpowder was even employed in plays wherein battles were not introduced. Thus at the close of Hamlet, Fortinbras says, "Go bid the soldiers shoot," and the stage direction runs, "A dead march. Exeunt bearing off the dead bodies; after which a peal of ordnance is shot off." And just as in 1846, the Garrick Theatre, in Goodman's Fields, was destroyed by fire owing to some wadding lodging in the flies after a performance of the Battle of Waterloo, so in 1613 the Globe Theatre, in Southwark, was burnt to the ground from the firing of "chambers" during a representation of King Henry the Eighth. Howes, in his additions to Stow's Chronicle, thus describes the event: "Also upon St. Peter's Day last (1613) the playhouse or theatre called the Globe, upon the Bankside, near London, by negligent discharging of a peal of ordnance, close to the south side thereof, the theatre took fire, and the wind suddenly dispersed the flame round about, and in a very short space the whole building was quite consumed and no man hurt; the house being filled with people to behold the play, namely, of Henry the Eighth; and the next spring it was new builded in a far fairer manner than before."

The paucity of Shakespeare's stage

armies has sometimes found its reflex in the limited means of country theatres of more modern date. The ambition of strolling managers is apt to be far in advance of their appliances, but they are rarely stayed by the difficulties of representation, or troubled with doubts as to the adequacy of their troop, in the words of a famous commander, to "go anywhere and do anything." We have heard of a provincial Rolla who at the last moment discovered that the army, wherewith he proposed to repulse the forces of Pizarro, consisted of one supernumerary only. The Peruvian chieftain proved himself equal to the situation, however, and adapted his speech to the case. Addressing his one soldier, he declaimed in his most dignified manner: "My brave associate, partner of my toil, my feelings and my fame, can Rolla's words add vigour to the virtuous energies which inspire your heart?" and so on. Thus altered, the speech was found to be sufficiently effective.

Two things were especially prized by the audiences of the past: a speech and a combat. "For God's sake, George, give me a speech and let me go home!" cried from the pit the wearied country squire of Queen Anne's time to his boon companion Powell, the actor, doomed to appear in a part deficient in opportunities for oratory. "But, Mr. Bayes, might we not have a little fighting?" inquires Johnson, in the burlesque of the Rehearsal, "for I love those plays where they cut and slash one another on the stage for a whole hour together."

The single combats that occur in Shakespeare's plays are very numerous. There is little need to remind the reader, for instance, of the hand-to-hand encounters of Macbeth and Macduff, Posthumus and Iachimo, Hotspur and the Prince of Wales, Richard and Richmond. Romeo has his fierce brawl with Tybalt, Hamlet his famous fencing scene, and there is serious crossing of swords both in Lear and Othello. English audiences, from an inherent pugnacity, or a natural inclination for physical feats, were wont to esteem highly the combats of the stage. The players were skilled in the use of their weapons, and could give excellent effect to their mimic conflicts. And this continued long after the wearing of swords had ceased to be a necessity or a fashion. The youthful actor acquired the art of fencing as an indispensable step in his theatrical education. A sword was one of the earliest "properties" of which he became possessor. He always looked forward to impressing his audience deeply by his skill in combat. Charles Mathews, the elder, has recorded in his too brief chapters of autobiography, "his passion for fencing which nothing could overcome." As an amateur actor he paid the manager of the Richmond Theatre seven guineas and a half for permission to undertake "the inferior, insipid part of Richmond," who does not appear until the fifth act of the play. The Richard of the night was a brother amateur, equally enthusiastic, one Litchfield by name. "I cared for nothing," wrote Mathews, "except the last scene of Richmond, but in that I was determined to have my full swing of carte and tierce. I had no notion of paying my seven guineas and a half without indulging my passion. In vain did the tyrant try to die after a decent time; in vain did he give indications of exhaustion; I would not allow him to give in. I drove him by main force from any position convenient for his last dying speech. The audience laughed; I heeded them not. They shouted; I was deaf. Had they hooted I should have lunged on in my unconsciousness of their interruption. I was resolved to show them all my accomplishments. Litchfield frequently whispered 'Enough!' but I thought with Macbeth, 'Damned be he who first cries, Hold! enough!' I kept him at it, and I believe we fought almost literally a long hour by Shrewsbury clock. To add to the merriment, a matter-of-fact fellow in the gallery, who in his innocence took everything for reality, and who was completely wrapt up and lost by the very cunning of the scene, at last shouted out, 'Why don't he shoot him?'"

The famous Mrs. Jordan was, it seems, unknown to Mathews, present among the audience on this occasion, having been attracted from her residence at Bushey by the announcement of an amateur Richard. "Years afterwards," records Mathews, "when we met in Drury Lane green-room, I was relating, amongst other theatrical anecdotes, the bumpkin's call from the gallery in commiseration of the trouble I had in killing Richard, when she shook me from my feet almost by starting up, clasping her hands, and in her fervent, soul-stirring, warm-hearted tones, exclaiming, 'Was that you? I was there!' and she screamed with laughter at the recollection of my acting in Richmond, and the length of our combat."

"Where shall I hit you, Mr. Kean?" inquired a provincial Laertes of the great tragedian.

"Where you *can*, sir," was the grim reply. For Kean had acquired fencing under Angelo, and was proud of his proficiency in the art. He delighted in prolonging his combats to the utmost, and invested them with extraordinary force and intensity. On some occasions he so identified himself with the character he represented as to decline to yield upon almost any terms. Hazlitt censures certain excesses of this kind which disfigured his performance of Richard. "He now actually fights with his doubled fists, after his sword is taken from him, like some helpless infant." "The fight," writes another critic, "was maintained under various vicissitudes, by one of which he was thrown to the earth; on his knee he defended himself, recovered his footing, and pressed his antagonist with renewed fury; his sword was struck from his grasp—he was mortally wounded; disdaining to fall," and so on. No wonder that many Richmonds and Macduffs, after combating with Mr. Kean, were left so exhausted and scant of breath as to be scarcely able to deliver audibly the closing speeches of their parts. The American stage has a highly coloured story of an English melodramatic actor with the pseudonym of Bill Shipton, who, "enacting a British officer in the Early Life of Washington, got so stupidly intoxicated, that when Miss Cuff, who played the youthful hero, had to fight and kill him in a duel, Bill Shipton wouldn't die; he even said loudly on the stage that he wouldn't. Mary Cuff fought on until she was ready to faint, and after she had repeated his cue for dying, which was 'Cowardly, hired assassin!' for the fourteenth time, he absolutely jumped off the stage, not even pretending to be on the point of death. Our indignant citizens then chased him all over the house, and he only escaped by jumping into the coffin which they bring on in Hamlet, Romeo, and Richard." The story has its humour, but is not to be implicitly credited.

Broad-sword combats were at one time very popular interludes at minor theatres. They were often quite distinct performances, prized for their own sake, and quite irrespective of their dramatic relevancy. It cannot be said that they suggested much resemblance to actual warfare. Still they demanded of the performers skill of a peculiar kind, great physical endurance and ceaseless activity. The combat-sword was an unlikely looking weapon, very short in the blade, with a protuberant hilt of curved bars to protect the knuckles of the combatant. The orchestra supplied a strongly accentuated tune, and the swords clashed together in strict time with the music. The fight raged hither and thither about the stage, each blow and parry, thrust and guard, being a matter of strict pre-arrangement. The music was hurried or slackened accordingly as the combat became more or less furious. "One, two, three, and under; one, two, three, and over;" "robber's cuts;" "sixes;" the encounter had an abundance of technical terms. And each performer was allowed a fair share of the feats accomplished: they took turns in executing the strangest exploits. Alternately they were beaten down on one knee, even lower still, till they crawled serpent-wise about the boards; they leaped into the air to avoid chopping blows at their lower members; they suddenly spun round on their heels, recovering themselves in time to guard a serious blow, aimed with too much deliberation, at some vital portion of their frames; occasionally they contrived an unexpected parry by swiftly passing the sword from the right hand to the left. Now and then they fought a kind of double combat, wielding a sword in either hand. Altogether, indeed, it was an extraordinary entertainment, which evoked thunders of applause from the audience. The eccentric agility of the combatants, the peculiarities of their method of engagement, the stirring staccato music of the band, the clashing of the swords and the shower of sparks thus occasioned, were found quite irresistible by numberless playgoers. Mr. Crummles, it will be remembered, had a very high opinion of this form of entertainment.

Of late, however, the broad-sword combat has declined as a theatrical attraction, if it has not altogether expired. The art involved in its presentment is less studied, or its professors are less able than was once the case. And perhaps burlesque has exposed too glaringly its ridiculous or seamy side. It was not one of those things that could long endure the assaults of travesty. The spell was potent enough in its way, but it dissolved when once interruptive laughter became generally audible. A creature of theatrical tradition, curiously sophisticated and enveloped in absurdities, its long survival is perhaps more surprising than the fact of its decease. Some attempt at ridiculing it seems to have been made so far back as the seventeenth century in the Duke of Buckingham's Rehearsal. Two characters enter, each bearing a lute and a drawn sword, and alternately fight and sing, "so that," as Bayes explains, "you

have at once your ear entertained with music and good language, and your eye satisfied with the garb and accoutrements of war." In the same play, also, the actors were wont to introduce hobby-horses, and fight a mimic battle of very extravagant nature.

Ridicule of a stage army was one of the established points of humour in the old burlesque of Bombastes Furioso, and many a pantomime has won applause by the comical character of the troops brought upon the scene. It should be said, however, that of late years the more famous battles of the theatre have been reproduced with remarkable liberality and painstaking. In lieu of "four swords and bucklers," a very numerous army of supernumeraries has marched to and fro upon the boards. In the ornate revivals of Shakespeare, undertaken from time to time by various managers, especial attention has been directed to the effective presentment of the battle scenes. The "auxiliaries" have frequently consisted of soldiers selected from the household troops. They are reputed to be the best of "supers," imposing of aspect, stalwart and straight-limbed, obedient to command, and skilled in marching and military formations. Londoners, perhaps, are little aware of the services their favourite regiments are prompt to lend to theatrical representations. Notably our grand operas owe much to the Coldstreams and Grenadiers. After a performance of Le Prophète or L'Etoile du Nord, let us say, hosts of these warriors may be seen hurrying from Covent Garden back to their barracks. Plays that have depended for their success solely upon the battles they have introduced have not been frequent of late years, and perhaps their popularity may fairly be counted as a thing of the past. We have left behind us the times when versatile Mr. Gomersal was found submitting to the public by turns his impersonation of Napoleon at Waterloo and Sir Arthur Wellesley at Seringapatam; when Shaw, the Lifeguardsman, after performing prodigies of valour, died heroically to slow music; when Lady Sale, armed with pistol and sabre, fought against heavy Afghan odds, and came off supremely victorious. Perhaps the public has ceased to care for history thus theatrically illustrated, or prefers to gather its information on the subject from despatches and special correspondence. The last theatrical venture of this class referred to our army's exploits in Abyssinia. But the play did not greatly please. Modern battles have, indeed, outgrown the stage, and the faculty of making "imaginary puissance" has become lost. In the theatre, as elsewhere, the demand is now for the literal, the accurate, and the strictly matter of fact.

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XV. AT LAST.

Two months have elapsed since the date of the proceedings last recorded, and the newspapers, for lack of something more exciting, have begun to chronicle the movements of the barometer, and the prospects of a severe winter. If, however, throughout England the climate were as it is in Torquay this bright sunny morning, the weather prophets would be considerably out in their calculations, and the disappointment of the schoolboys and the cutlers, who were looking forward to a three weeks' skating season, would be intense, for here the air is soft and balmy, the sun bright and hot—so hot, that the gentleman toiling slowly up the hill stops just opposite the club, and unbuttons his long great-coat, and lifts his hat to let the sea-breeze cool his forehead. Then, reinvigorated, he proceeds, though his step is still slow, and his breathing somewhat laboured; his destination is, however, close at hand. Through the trim and pretty garden he approaches a villa, perched on a green mound and overhanging the sea, and a young lady, who has been apparently watching for his arrival from the window, meets him in the hall with outstretched hands, and with a face bright with pleasure.

"You are come at last, Mr. Drage," she said.

"You may be certain I came as soon as I could," said the rector, bending down, and kissing her forehead; "but it took some time to settle my father's affairs, and put matters in train for disposing of his share of the business to his partner. However, all that required my personal superintendence is now at an end, and I have escaped from London. And Margaret?"

"Still progressing slowly, but surely. You will find her greatly changed in appearance, dear Mr. Drage; she is still very weak and very thin, but she has improved wonderfully since she came to this place, and day by day we see a happy difference in her."

"You told me in your letter that she

had made no allusion to anything that occurred during that dreadful time."

"Nor has she up to this moment. She is perfectly tranquil, and apparently not unhappy, speaks frequently of Gerald, and seems anxious that we should be married as soon as possible; but sometimes she will lie for hours without speaking, and when I steal quietly up to her, I find the traces of tears upon her cheeks."

"Poor dear Margaret! She knows I am coming?"

"Oh, yes; and has been expecting you very anxiously. If you like I will take you to her now."

Mr. Drage left his hat and coat in the pretty little hall where this conversation took place, and followed Rose Pierrepoint into the drawing-room. On a couch before the window overlooking the sea lay Madge, looking very pale and very delicate, but, as the rector thought, wonderfully beautiful, looking, as the rector also thought, more like a pictured saint than a human being; with her long brown hair hanging over her shoulders, and her white hands clasped in front of her. Her eyes were closed, and she did not open them until Rose said, "Madge, darling, here is our best friend." Then she looked up, and a bright burning flush overspread her face as she partially raised herself on one arm, and stretched out the other hand. The rector took the hand, and lifted it to his lips, dropping into the easy-chair placed by the sofa as Rose left the room.

Margaret was the first to speak.

"Do you find me much changed?" she said.

"No," said the rector, brightly, "nothing like so much as I had anticipated. You have had a serious illness, and you are still very weak, but your eyes are bright, and your voice is clear, as it was in the old days."

"The old days," echoed Madge, "how far off they seem! part and parcel of another life almost, so indistinct are they to me. Do you know that up to this hour my ideas of what happened at that fearful time are dim and blurred? Do you know that I have asked no one, not even Gerald, not even Rose, for any details of those events? Do you know why I have been so silent?"

The rector bent his head.

"Because," she continued, "I was waiting for you, to whom I have given my utmost confidence, to tell me all that had occurred. I could not trust myself to talk on the subject with them; I can with you."

"Margaret," said the rector, gently, "you have just allowed that you are still very weak; don't you think that any conversation of this kind had better be postponed——"

"Not for one moment," she said; "I am strong enough to hear anything, and shall merely be restless and uneasy until I know how much of what is constantly recurring in my mind is true, and how much false. Tell me, then, at once. I remember nothing after fainting in the court. Stay," she added, seeing him hesitate, "you fear to distress me. But I already know that Philip Vane is dead. Did he die by his own hand?"

"That is not positively known," said the rector; "but it is believed that he accidentally fell from the pier at Dover. The body was found two days afterwards off St. Margaret's, and was recognised as that of a man who had left a portmanteau in the cloak-room at the railway. On being opened, the portmanteau was found to contain a shirt with blood-stained wristbands, and heavily-mudded trousers and boots; the latter corresponding exactly with the footmarks on the Wheatcroft lawn. Further inquiry proved that he had been in Springside on that dreadful day, having actually called at my house and spoken to my servant; and all these circumstances, corroborated with your evidence, left no doubt on the minds of the magistrates, who discharged Mr. Heriot; while the coroner's jury brought in a verdict of wilful murder against Philip Vane. You are distressed, Margaret, I had better stop?"

"No; pray go on. And Gerald was liberated at once?"

"Not merely liberated, but became the idol of the hour. The revulsion of popular feeling was extraordinary. Nothing, however, not even his restoration to Rose's arms, I think, gave him so much joy as my discovery of a letter amongst poor Sir Geoffry's papers, written two days before his death, a letter addressed to George, in which he confessed his harsh treatment of him, and implored his return to his position and his home. You are crying, Margaret?"

"They are tears of joy, dear friend. I had no idea that letter had been written, though Sir Geoffry had spoken of his intention of writing it. Thank Heaven he lived to carry that intention into effect. And Gerald—George—is now happy?"

"Intensely happy. I know not which is the happier, he or Rose. Your illness has been the only blot on their felicity."

"I suppose they will be married at once?" asked Madge.

"Now that you are convalescent, there is no occasion for any further delay. Sir Geoffry died intestate, and Gerald is consequently sole heir. He is going to sell Wheatcroft, and, for some time at least, travel abroad. So soon as you are able to bear the fatigue of the journey they will be married and start."

"Did they purpose taking me with them?"

"They did; they have talked of it often. George Heriot was only speaking to me about it two days ago in London."

"I shall relieve them of that responsibility," said Madge, with a smile; "they shall have no querulous invalid to destroy the happiness of their bridal tour."

"And what will you do, Margaret?"

"Wait till I am a little stronger, and then seek for some new situation."

A sharp expression of pain passed across the rector's face.

"Margaret," he said, bending over her couch, "months ago I asked you to become my wife. There was an obstacle then, and you refused—that obstacle no longer exists. Since then I have seen you surrounded by dangers, and difficulties, and trials of no ordinary kind, and in them all your goodness and your purity have been triumphant, and rendered you more than ever dear to me. Margaret, I ask you once again: for pity's sake, do not give me the same reply."

"I—I could not go back to Springside," she said.

"Nor is there any occasion for it, dearest one. By my father's death, I am rendered more than rich. The physician, whom I consulted in London, spoke to me words of hope, more cheering than I could have imagined; he told me that, by wintering in a warm climate, my life may yet be prolonged to the ordinary span. It is for you to give me an interest in that life, Margaret. What will you do?"

"I would give my life to save yours," she whispered. "I will devote half of mine to tending yours."

She raised her eyes to his, and in them he saw the dawn of life and hope.

"My darling, my own!"

Mr. Delabole's friends at the board of the extinct Terra del Fuegos Silver Mining Company did him injustice in suggesting that he had intended to mislead by giving King's Cross as the address to the cabman. He proceeded to that station, thence to Peterborough, thence, per Great Eastern Railway, to Harwich, and thence, per steamer, to Rotterdam. Remaining on the Continent a few months, and baffling all attempts to track him, he finally made his way to Havre, and then took ship for America. Mr. Delabole, being possessed of a large sum of money and great business talents, found admirable scope for financing operations in the United States, and is now one of the leading lights of Wall-street.

Mrs. Bendixen never received the letter which Philip Vane addressed to her on the morning of his flight, and knew nothing of her intended husband's crime and fate until she read of both in a newspaper. The shock sobered her for a time, and she disappeared from society. There are rumours, however, that she has seen sufficient of the charms of solitude, and intends reappearing this season with an addition to her establishment, in the person of a husband—a German tenor of military appearance and a flute-like voice.

George Heriot and Rose have their home in Florence; the artistic society of which pleasantest of cities delights both of them.

Last autumn, while the Triennial Musical Festival was being held at Wexeter, a lady suddenly detached herself from a large party, which was crossing the cathedral yard, and running up to old Miss Cave, who was standing looking on in admiration, seized her by both hands and kissed her on the cheek. They had a short but animated conversation, then the lady hurried off to rejoin her friends.

"More friends among the quality, Susan?" said Sam Cave, as he bustled up to her. "Who was that lady just now—the bishop's wife or the new dean's daughter?"

"Neither one nor the other, Sam," said old Miss Cave, half laughing, half crying. "You have seen that lady often before. She is staying at the Deanery now with her husband, who is a clergyman; but you recollect her when she was our leading lady, and was called Madge Pierrepoint."

THE END OF CASTAWAY.

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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XXV. THE WICKED FAGGOTS.

MAY and Paul were sitting together in the firelight in the little brown parlour. They had now been engaged a week, and though winter was coming on, and the rime was white upon the window-pane, still the atmosphere of their mountain world was all rose-coloured. They had long ago arranged all about their future, and, after a week's perfect happiness, the details of their hopes and their trust in each other seemed already to be quite an old story. They were now to be intensely happy for the remainder of their lives. Paul had undertaken the management of Miss Martha's farm, and after a year of prudent waiting the wedding was to take place. The name of Simon of Tobereevil had not been mentioned during the arrangement of their plans. But Paul was not now afraid of him, nor of the curse, nor of the heirship.

As they sat, radiant with happiness, in the smiles of the firelight, there came a sudden knocking on the house door of Monasterlea.

After some stepping backward and forward of Bridget between the parlour and hall, a panting, ruddy group made a shy appearance in the framework of the doorway.

"It's Misther Paul Finiston I want," said Bid, "an' I have a message from Simon——"

"A message from whom?" cried Paul, thinking his ears must have deceived him.

"From Simon Finiston, yer honor, the masther of Tobereevil, an' I've got it here fast." And Nan flourished her scrap of paper, and delivered it up to Paul's eager hand. The feeble writing said:

"Will Paul Finiston come and visit an old man who is cruelly beset by thieves and sharpers?"

Paul turned red and pale, and May turned redder and paler as she looked over his shoulder. Bid poured forth a triumphant history of the attempt that had been made to deceive the old miser, and how the agent had been outwitted, and how Simon had taken the news of his nephew's presence in the country. Aunt Martha appeared in the midst of the excitement. The good old lady was beside herself with joy. This was the direct work of Providence. Simon's poor heart had been touched at last, in the eleventh hour. Miss Martha would have liked to go away to her own room to shed a few glad tears; but those good people, the messengers, had an urgent claim on her attention, and she swept them all away with her, to give them supper, and ask them questions, in the kitchen.

But in the mean time Con, who had been making violent demonstrations of delight at seeing Paul again, hit upon a plan for showing his gratitude. His arms were full of the faggots which were the wages of the gossoons, and as Nan pulled him out of the room, he presented a faggot to Paul and another to May. Bid turned on her step and rushed forward with alarm.

"Don't take them! Don't touch them! They're a bad, unlucky present for wan crature to give till another."

"What do you mean?" asked Paul.

"Sure they growed in the bad woods," said Bid, "an' the hearth's betther that's widout them. Poor folks is glad to burn

anythin' in the cowld. Bud let him take them all away wid him. Don't you have nothin' to do wid them!"

Paul laughed. "Nonsense, my good woman. We must not vex the simple fellow."

May gathered up the bundles in her apron. "Poor bad little sticks," she said, "I will put them out of the way."

So Bid had to let her keep them, and went away muttering. May at once put the faggots out of sight, and returning to Paul, found him walking about the room in a state of high excitement.

"Oh, my love!" he said, going to meet her. "Ill-luck is all over with me. The spell of the curse is broken. This is what you have done for me. No sooner is your hand clasped in mine than the world is turned upside-down for the purpose of bringing me good fortune."

"You silly old Paul," said May, shaking her head. "Only that you are a poet, we should not tolerate such nonsense."

"My darling shall be lady of the land," went on Paul. "We will pull down the cursed old house, every stone of it; and we will build up a new one—new stones, new mortar, new timber; not an atom of the old walls shall get mixed up with the new ones. We will furnish it with every luxury——"

"But the people, Paul dear? What will you do for the people?"

"Oh, the people of course. They shall pull down the old house, and build up the new one. They shall also have new cottages and low rents. I warrant you I will rub the rust off old Simon's guineas. There shall be schools and almshouses. We will cultivate the land and have a mill on the river. I will show that a man can be generous though sprung from a race of misers."

"Yes; it will be a triumph. Oh, Paul, what a life we have before us! But we must not run too fast. We are not yet the lord and the lady of Tobereevil."

"We are virtually so."

"He is known to be very whimsical," suggested May.

"Oh, do not damp me!" cried Paul, with sudden impatience. "I have done with fear. Do not *you* thrust it back upon me."

"No," said May; "not for the world. You will know better when you have seen the old man."

He did not hear the pain that was in her voice. He did not notice that he had spoken roughly to her as he had never done before. May hated herself because the tears came into her eyes. And Paul's thoughts were busy with the future master of Tobereevil.

"Yes," he said. "Is it too late to go to-night?"

He let fall her hand and went out to the hall-door. The snow was beginning to fall, and had blotted out the footprints of the messengers. It would be folly to make new tracks across the peace of that white world into the gloom of the Tobereevil Woods that night. Even to Paul's impatience it seemed that it must be so. May stood downcast on the hearth. There was something new and strange about Paul which made her hate the sight of Simon Finiston's feeble scrawl which lay before her on the mantelpiece.

CHAPTER XXVI. A MORNING VISIT.

EARLY the next morning May and Paul set off together over the snow to Tobereevil. Paul would not go alone. He had a fancy that the miser would be propitiated by the sight of May's charming figure, in a little red cloak and white knitted hood. May, who was not so sanguine, went much against her wish. She had a dread of the old man who had been the ogre of her childhood, and she did not believe in his new freak. She found it hard that this change should have come just as Paul was making himself happy over the prospect of a simple and an unambitious life. Yet she went to please him, trying to temper his wild expectations, and ready to cheer him if his uncertain temper should give way to another mood. It was impossible but that both hearts should become a little chilled as they came nearer to their destination and emerged from the trees into the shadow of the dilapidated mansion. Paul became pale, but he laughed and appeared in the best spirits. May was silent, and offered a secret prayer for the result of this venture, which seemed so awful. The doors were all barred up, and knocker there was none. The bell was now broken which had once roused Tibbie's ire under Miss Martha's hand. To-day there was no Tibbie to come and fight with the bold ones; it was the miser himself who came shuffling across the hall. He came and took away the bars, slowly and with difficulty, and stood peering at them through the half-open door; a weird, aged skeleton, very pitiful, very ugly, and suspicious-looking.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"I am Paul Finiston."

"What brings you here?"

"A message from my uncle, which I received last night. I did not intend to trouble him, but as he sent for me I am come."

"Humph! that is spoken like an honest man. You are welcome to Tobereevil. And who is the lady?"

"This lady is my affianced wife," said Paul, drawing May's hand proudly through his arm.

"Ah, indeed," sneered the miser. "But I only wanted you, I did not send for your wife."

"Oh," said May, eagerly, "do not be displeased with him on my account, I will go back at once. I will not be in the way."

The time had been when he would have flung the door in their faces; but he was now in extremity, and, besides, he was greatly weakened, in his body and in his passions, since that day when Miss Martha had been forced to fly from his presence. It might be that May's glowing face and appealing eyes touched some spot in the withered heart which was not altogether dead. At all events, he answered her with strange mildness.

"You may walk about the house," he said, "till our business is finished."

May thanked him, as gratefully as if she had been a tenant with a large family to whom he had granted a lease. The miser then led Paul across the hall, leaving May to find her way whither she pleased. And she noticed with another pang such as she had felt the night before, that Paul did not once turn his head to look back at her as he went. Might it be that the monstrous desire of wealth of which Paul had been so afraid, would yet so grow up within him that it would thrust her out of his heart? She paused on a step of the gloomy staircase, stricken by the thought of such an ending for her love. It had been so with Miss Martha; might it not be so with her? Might there not, after all, be some dire reality in the inevitable influence of that curse which had so eaten up all virtue born into the family of Finiston? She remembered that in the Bible there are histories of races which were cursed for generations because of the sins of some dead man. But so many had passed away since the first Finiston had sinned. "So many generations, oh, my God!" cried May.

She prayed out of the strength of her soul for the safety of her love. Rather let him be sent away from her to the far end of the earth, than be drawn into the wretched circle round which his forefathers had travelled with weakened brains and withered hearts. Take her life, take her health; take even Paul's love out of her future; but save him from the evil that had overwhelmed his kin. Having thus emptied her heart of every selfish thought, courage returned; and with it the hope that was familiar to her. After all, it was but natural that Paul should be absorbed by the sudden change in his fortunes. And it was also natural that the old man should have grown tired of his dreary iniquity. It was coming then at last, the good time long expected at Tobereevil, and she must not be so ungrateful as to mourn for it. Having conquered her short agony, she took her way bravely through the mildewing house.

There was nothing to keep her from going into any room she pleased, and Simon had told her to "walk about the house." The aged locks had long ago rusted from their fastenings on the doors. She wandered into noble rooms where fragments of rich hangings fluttered dolefully in the breeze which came in through the broken windows. Ceilings that had been painted in mellow pictures still showed some faded tints between the blotches of the damp and the scars where the plaster had dropped in dust to the floor. There were a few articles of weather-beaten furniture to be seen, but the rooms were mostly empty. Snow lay in heaps on the inner ledges of the windows, and the shriek of the wind went from passage to passage, and lamented along the corridors and up and down the staircases. There was but a little wind outside, but the crannies of the mansion of Tobereevil knew how to make much of a little wind. It seemed to May as if some bird of ill omen had made his nest under the rafters of the roof, and that he flew from chamber to chamber, from garret to cellar, for ever on the wing, piercing the walls with his shrill cry of wrath at the hatefulness of the misers of Tobereevil. Desolation, and blight, and the print of wickedness were everywhere. It would be better, as Paul said, to take down the old building; every stone of it.

She sat in an old grim carven chair, standing solitary in its corner; and she began to think for the first time of what it would be to find herself mistress of all the wealth of Tobereevil. Should she really

be the lady of a great mansion, with jewels and satins, and rich furniture, and fine pictures all around her; with a library and a music-room, and drawing-rooms, and many servants? And should she be as happy in her grandeur, as in the little crooked parlour at Monasterlea? How could she know? If Paul should prove to be happy, then would she be happy too.

In the mean time uncle and nephew had retreated to the miser's den. A half-shutter had been opened, so that they might see each other, and have light to make their bargain. The old man eyed the young one by the entering ray, as keenly as the watchman who scans a doubtful wayfarer by the gleam of his dark-lantern. He was looking for the signs of the spendthrift in his nephew's appearance. But Paul was no dandy; his dress was plain rough frieze. The miser looked grudgingly at his comfortable clothing, but there was nothing that he could exactly complain of. Had Paul come unbidden a little time ago, he would have railed at his apparel, merely because it was not threadbare; now, he only resented silently its decency and comfort. He would have threatened him for his imprudence in engaging to marry a wife; but he spoke no more of May. He gathered about him such dignity as he could muster, as he sat down and leaned back in his chair, and motioned to Paul to take his seat on a little broken bench which stood opposite at the other side of the miserable hearth. This Paul did, and was conscious all through the scene which followed of a ridiculous and not very successful effort to balance himself on a seat to which a fourth leg was wanting.

"You have been abroad for some years, I understand," said Simon. "Do you intend to remain here, or to return to where you came from?"

"I mean to stay at home," said Paul.

"That is, you made up your mind to it after you got my note last night."

"No, indeed," said Paul, "your note had nothing to do with it. I had made up my mind to it long ago."

"And pray what had you marked out for yourself to do? Lie in wait among the hills for the old man's death, expecting to be master of all he has?"

"To tell you the truth, sir," said Paul, throwing back his head, "there is nothing I have dreaded and disliked all my life so much as the thought of being your heir. I went abroad to forget it, and I came home in reality only to seek a wife. For various reasons I think it better now to stay where I am. I have found some employment, and I am content to be poor. If you had not sent for me you should never, as I told you, have seen my face."

"Humph!" said Simon. "Upon my word, young man, you are very bold! So you dread and dislike me, and don't want to be my heir. And what if I show you the door, sir, in return for such a compliment?"

"I have no objection, sir; I am not anxious to stay." And yet Paul felt himself even at the moment devoured by a new hunger for the favours which this dreadful dotard held in his lean hand to give. Such ambition, however, being still new to him, an honest shame held it in check, and he still carried himself with his habitual independent bearing. But had he been bent on pleasing the miser he could not have spoken better.

"Very well, sir, but I have not done with you yet. It seems that there will be no courtesy lost between us. What is this employment which you have got in the country?"

"I have undertaken to manage the farm of a tenant of yours," said Paul, "and I have brought a little money home with me from abroad. Only a little, but I'll do well enough."

"Until the old man dies," sneered the miser.

"Sir!" said Paul, "I have already told you my mind. I came here to oblige you, and I will now go my way."

And he rose to his feet, burning inwardly with strange disappointment and despair. He felt that he had been made a fool of, and that he was no longer indifferent as to the old man's intentions with regard to himself. Most truly the change in him had wrought very rapidly. The shadow of his race seemed to wrap him from the light. It had descended from this old roof-tree, which he had been rash enough to place between himself and the tranquil arch of heaven; it would depart with him over this threshold, which he had been wicked enough to cross. The demon of covetousness had at last got possession of him; and peace, and hope, and joy were for him no more.

"Stay," said Simon. "Not so fast, young man! I do not want to fight, but to do honest business with you. I have been cheated and played upon by knaves. I want an agent to do my work among my tenants. I am at present all alone, without

agent or servant, and I cannot get on alone, for people would overreach me. So I ask you to be my agent, to manage my business for me. I will pay you something, of course; but money is very scarce."

Paul's passion subsided, and he bent his brows and considered the miser's offer. He seemed the sport of some mischievous spirit that ruled him for the hour with rapidly changing moods, whose fitful shiftings were imperceptible to himself. His pang of disappointment had vanished, and also his vision of lost contentment, and he only thought now of the value of the proposal that had been made to him. It was less than he had dreamed of while walking that morning through the Woods of Tobereevil; but in his present hunger for power any morsel was a boon.

"I will be glad to do my best," he answered, presently.

"That is well," said the miser, "but you must work heart and soul for me. And if you can make a little money for me it will be better for yourself. If you serve me faithfully and learn thrifty habits you shall have any little penny I possess, when I die."

"Indeed, sir!" said Paul; and the idea of this heirship seemed to grow into some brilliant thing that dazzled him. His head got quite giddy, and he tingled with delight. He felt himself already the master of Tobereevil. Only yesterday morning he had held such a title to be the least desirable in the world; but now a different humour swayed him, and he craved it as if it were life. No curse should ever hurt him. He was a strong, brave man, and he would use his power well. He had shuddered at a myth, and wasted his strength upon a phantom. He had come face to face with the temptation he had so dreaded all his life, and found himself as triumphant and happy as a king.

"What now about that dread and dislike?" jeered Simon; as he watched joy start suddenly into the young man's face.

"I have changed my mind," said Paul, "but only since you have treated me like an honest man."

When the interview was over this heir of the miser was in such a state of elation that he quite forgot May, and walked out several yards into the snow without thinking of her. And May, from an upper window, saw him thus leave the place. She was cold and tired, but she had been waiting for him patiently. Wounded, and distraught, and half blind with vexed tears, she made her way through the rooms and down the staircases, pale as a ghost and shaken with misgivings. But Paul had come back for her, and her delight at seeing this swept away the sharp bitterness of a few minutes. Paul was in wonderful excitement during all the walk home. Even May's bright spirit had to get on tip-toe to be even with him.

CHRONICLES OF LONDON STREETS.

LONDON BRIDGE.

THERE is no certain record of when the first London Bridge was built. It is true that Dion Cassius, writing nearly two hundred years after the invasion of Britain by Claudius, speaks vaguely of a bridge across the Thames in the reign of that emperor; but it is more probable that no bridge really existed till the year 994, the year after the invasion of Olaf the Dane, in the reign of King Ethelred. It is at least certain that in the year 1008, in the reign of Ethelred the Second, the Unready, there was a bridge, for, according to Snorro Sturlesonius, an Icelandic historian, Olaf the Norwegian, an ally of Ethelred, attacking the Danes, who had fortified themselves in Southwark, fastened his vessels to the piles of London Bridge, which the Danes held, and dragged down the whole structure. This Olaf, afterwards a martyr, is the patron saint from whom the church, now standing at the south-east corner of London Bridge, derived its christian name. Tooley-street below, a word corrupted from Saint Olave, also preserves the memory of the Norwegian king, eventually slain near Drontheim by Knut, King of Denmark.

Still, whenever the churchwardens and vestry of St. Mary Overies, on the Bankside, meet over their cups, the first toast, says an antiquary who has written an exhaustive history of London Bridge, is to their church's patron saint, "Old Moll." This Old Moll was, according to Stow, Mary, the daughter of a ferryman at this part of the river, who left all her money to build a house of sisters, where the east part of St. Mary Overies now stands. In time the nunnery became a house of priests, who built the first wooden bridge over the Thames. There is still existing at the church of St. Mary Overies a skeleton effigy, which some declare to be that of Audery, the ferryman, father of the immortal Moll. The legend goes that this John Overy, or Audery, was a rich and covetous

miser, mean, penurious, and insanely fond of hoarding his hard-earned fees. He had a pious and beautiful daughter who, though kept in seclusion by her father, was loved by a young gallant, who secretly wooed and won her. One day the old hunks, to save a day's food, resolved to feign himself dead for twenty-four hours, vainly expecting that his servants, from common decency, would fast till his funeral. With his daughter's help, he therefore laid himself out, wrapped in a sheet, with one taper burning at his head, and another at his feet. The lean, half-starved servants, however, instead of lamenting their master's decease, leaped up overjoyed, danced round the body, broke open the larder, and fell to feasting. The old ferryman bore all this as long as flesh and blood could bear it, but at last he scrambled up in his sheet, a candle in each hand, to scold and chase the rascals from the house; when one of the boldest of them, thinking it was the devil himself, snatched up the butt-end of a broken oar, and struck out his master's brains. On hearing of this unintentional homicide, the lover came posting up to London so fast, that his horse stumbled, and the eager lover, alas! broke his neck. On this second misfortune, Mary Overy, shrouding her beauty in a cowl, retired into a cloister for life. The corpse of the old usurer was refused Christian burial, he being deemed by the clergy a wicked and excommunicated man. The friars of Bermondsey Abbey, however, in the absence of their father abbot, were bribed to give the body a little earth for charity. The abbot on his return, enraged at the friars' cupidity, had the corpse dug up and thrown on the back of an ass, that was then turned out of the abbey gates. The patient beast carried the corpse up Kent-street, and shook it off under the gibbet, near the small pond once called St. Thomas-a-Waterings, where it was roughly interred. The effigy is really, as Gough, in his Sepulchral Monuments, says most of such figures are, the work of the fifteenth century; now, the real Audery, if he lived at all, lived long before the Conquest, for the first wooden bridge was, it is thought, probably built to stop the Danish pirate vessels.

The first wooden bridge was destroyed by a terrible flood and storm, mentioned in the Annals of Waverley Abbey, which, in the year 1091, blew down six hundred London houses and lifted the roof off Bow Church. In the second year of Stephen, a fire, that swept away all the wooden houses of London, from Aldgate to St. Paul's, destroyed the second wooden bridge.

The first stone London Bridge was begun in 1176, by Peter, a priest and chaplain of St. Mary Colechurch, a building which—till the Great Fire made short work of it—stood in Conyhoop-lane, on the north side of the Poultry. There long existed a senseless tradition that pious Peter of the Poultry reared the arches of his bridge upon woolpacks; the fact, perhaps, being, that Henry the Second generously gave towards the building a new tax levied upon his subjects' wool. Peter's bridge, which took thirty-three years building, boasted nineteen pointed stone arches, and was nine hundred and twenty-six feet long, and forty feet wide. It included a wooden drawbridge, and the piers were raised upon platforms (called starlings) of strong elm piles, covered by thick planks bolted together, that impeded the passage of barges. On the tenth pier was erected a two-storied chapel, forty feet high and sixty feet long, to Saint Thomas A'Beckett. The lower chapel could be entered either from the chapel above, or from the river, by a flight of stone stairs. The founder himself was buried under the chapel staircase. Peter's bridge was partly destroyed by a great fire in 1212, four years after it was finished, and while its stones were still sharp and white. There were even then houses upon it, and gate-towers, and many people crowding to help, or to see the sight, got wedged in between two fires by a shifting of the wind, and some three thousand were either burnt or drowned. King John, after this, granted certain tolls, levied on foreign merchants, towards the bridge repairs.

Henry the Third, according to a patent roll, dated from Portsmouth, 1252, permitted certain monks, called the Brethren of London Bridge, with his special sanction, to travel over England and collect alms. In this same reign (1263), the bridge became the scene of great scorn and insult, shown by the turbulent citizens to Henry's queen, Eleanor of Provence, who was opposed to the people's friends, the barons, who were still contending for the final settlement of Magna Charta. As the queen and her ladies, in their gilded barge, were on their way to Windsor, and preparing to shoot the dangerous bridge, the rabble above assailed her with shouts and reproaches, and casting heavy stones and mud into her boat, upon her and her bright-clothed maidens, drove them back to the Tower, where the king was garrisoned. Towards the end of the same year, when Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, marched on London, the king and his

forces occupied Southwark, and, to thwart the citizens, locked up the bridge gates, and threw the ponderous keys into the Thames. But no locks can bar out Fate; the gates were broken open by a flood of citizens, the king was driven back, and Simon entered London. After the battle of Evesham, where the great earl fell, the king, perhaps remembering old grudges, took the half-ruinous bridge into his own hands, and delivered it over to the queen, who sadly neglected it. There were great complaints of this neglect in the reign of Edward the First, and again the holy brothers went forth to collect alms throughout the land. The king gave lands also for the support of the bridge; namely, near the Mansion House, Old Change, and Ivy-lane. He also appointed tolls—every man on foot, with merchandise, to pay one farthing; every horseman, one penny; every pack carried on horseback, one halfpenny. This same year, 1281, four arches of London Bridge were carried away by the same thaw-flood that destroyed Rochester Bridge.

The reign of Edward was disgraced by the cruel revenge taken by the warlike monarch on William Wallace. In August, 1305, on Edward's return from the fourth invasion of Scotland, "this man of Belial," as Matthew of Westminster calls Wallace, was drawn on a sledge to Smithfield, there hung, embowelled, beheaded, quartered, and his head set on a pole on London Bridge. An old ballad in the Harleian Collection, describing the execution of Simon Fraser, another Scotch guerilla leader, in the following year, concludes thus:

Many was the wives-child that looked on him that day
And said, Alas! that he was born and so vilely forlorn,
So fierce man as he was.
Now stands the head above the town bridge,
Fast by Wallace's, sooth for to say.

The heads of these two Scotch patriots were placed side by side on the gate at the north or London end of the bridge.

The troublous reign of the young profligate, Richard the Second, brought more fighting to the bridge, for Wat Tyler and his fierce Kentish and Surrey men then came chafing to the gates, which the mayor, William Walworth, had chained and barred, pulling up the drawbridge. Upon this the wild men shouted across to the wardens of the bridge to let them over or they would destroy them all, and, from sheer fear, the wardens yielded. In that savage crowd the Brethren of the Bridge, as Thomas of Walsingham says, were pressing with processions and prayers for peace. In 1390, fighting of a gayer and less bloodthirsty kind took place on the bridge. No dandy Eglinton tournament this, but a genuine grapple with spear, sword, and dagger. Sir David Lindsay, of Glenesk, who had married a daughter of Robert the Second, King of Scotland, challenged to the joust Lord Wells, our ambassador in Scotland, a man described by Andrew of Wyntoun, a poetical Scotch chronicler, as being

Manful, stout, and of good pith,
And high of heart he was therewith.

Sir David arrived from Scotland with twenty-nine attendants and thirty horses. The king presided at the tournament. The arms Lindsay bore on his shield, banner, and trappings were gules, a fesse chequé argent and azure; those of Wells, or, a lion rampant, double queuée, sable. At the first shock the spears broke, and the crowd shouted that Lindsay was secured to his saddle. The earl at that leaped off his charger, vaulted back, then dashed on to the collision. At the third crash Wells fell heavily, as if dead. In the final grapple Lindsay, fastening his dagger into the armour of the English knight, lifted him from the ground, and dashed him, finally vanquished, to the earth. According to Andrew of Wyntoun, the king called out from his "summer castle," "Good Cousin Lindsay, do forth that thou should do this day;" but the generous Scotchman threw himself on Wells and embraced him till he revived. Nor did he stop there; during Wells's sickness of three months Lindsay visited him in the gentlest manner, even like the most courteous companion, and did not omit one day. For he had fought, says Boethius, "without anger, and but for glory." And to commemorate that glorious St. George's Day, the Scotch earl founded a chantry at Dundee, with a gift of forty-eight marks (thirty-two pounds) yearly for seven priests and divers virgins to sing anthems to the patron saint of England.

In 1392, when Richard the Second returned to London reconciled to the citizens, who had resented his reckless extravagance, London Bridge was the centre of splendid pageants. At the bridge gate the citizens presented the handsome young scapegrace with a milk-white charger, caparisoned in cloth of gold, and hung with silver bells, and gave the queen a white palfrey, caparisoned in white and red; while from every window hung cloths of gold and silver. The citizens ended by redeeming their forfeited charter by a payment of ten thousand pounds. In 1396, when Richard had lost his first queen, Anne of Bohemia, and

married the child-daughter of Charles the Sixth of France, the crowd was so great to welcome the young queen, that at London Bridge nine persons were crushed to death in the crowd. The reign of Richard the Second was indeed a memorable one for London Bridge. The year Richard the Second was deposed, Henry of Lancaster laid rough hands on four knights, who had three years before smothered the old Duke of Gloucester, by the king, his nephew's, commands. The murderers were dragged to Cheapside, and there had their hands lopped off at a fishmonger's stall. The heads were spiked over the gate of London Bridge, and the bodies strung together on a gibbet. Nor did these heads long remain unaccompanied, for in 1407-1408, Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, was beheaded, and Lord Bardolf, one of his adherents, who had joined in a northern insurrection, was quartered, and the earl's head and a flitch of unfortunate Bardolf were set upon London Bridge.

There was a great rejoicing on London Bridge when Henry the Fifth returned with his long train of French captives from the red field of Agincourt, in November, 1415. The mayor of London, with all the aldermen and crafts in scarlet gowns and red and white hoods, welcomed him back to his capital, and on the gate-tower stood a male and female giant, the former having the keys of the city hanging from a staff, while trumpeters with horns and clarions sounded welcome to the conqueror of the French. In front of the gate was written, "The King's City of Justice." On a column on one side was an antelope, with a shield of the royal arms hanging round his neck, and holding a sceptre, which he offered to the king, in his right foot. On the opposite column stood a lion rampant, with the king's banner in his dexter claw. At the foot of the bridge rose a painted tower, with an effigy of Saint George in complete armour in the midst under a tabernacle. The saint's head was crowned with laurel, interwoven with gems, and behind him spread a tapestry emblazoned with escutcheons. The turrets, embossed with the royal arms, were plumed with banners. Across the tower spread two scrolls with the mottoes, "To God only be honour and glory," and "The streams of the river make glad the city of God." In the house adjoining stood bright-faced children singing welcome to the king, and accompanied by the melody of organs. The hero of Agincourt rode conspicuous above all on a courser trapped with party colours, one-half blue velvet, embroidered with antelopes (the arms of the Bohun family), having large flowers springing between their horns. These trappings were afterwards utilised as copes for Westminster Abbey.

Lydgate, that Suffolk monk who succeeded Chaucer in the bede roll of English poets, wrote a poem (the authorship is not undisputed) on this day's celebrations. "Hail London!" he makes the king exclaim at the first sight of the red roofs, "Christ you keep from every care;" and the last verse of the quaint poem runs thus:

> And at the drawbridge that is fast by
> Two towers there were up'pight;
> An antelope and a lion standing hym by,
> Above them Saint George our lady's knight.
> Benedictus they gan sing,
> Quis venit in nomine domini, Gode's knight.
> Gracias Dei with you doth spring,
> Wot ye right well that thus it was
> Gloria tibi Trinitas.

Seven years after this rejoicing-day the corpse of the young hero (only thirty-four) was borne over the bridge on its way from Vincennes to Westminster Abbey. On a bier covered with red silk and beaten gold lay a painted effigy of the king, robed and crowned, and holding sceptre, ball, and cross. Six richly-harnessed horses drew the chariot, the hangings blazoned with the arms of Saint George, Normandy, King Arthur, Saint Edward the Confessor, France, and France and England, quarterly. A costly canopy was held over the royal bier, and ten bishops in their pontificals, with mitred abbots, priests, and innumerable citizens, met the corpse, and received it with due honour, the priests singing a dirge. Three hundred torch-bearers, habited in white, surrounded the bier; after them came five thousand mounted men-at-arms in black armour, holding their spears reversed, and nobles followed bearing pennons, banners, and bannerols, while twelve captains preceded bearing the king's heraldic achievement. After the body followed all the servants of the household in black, James the First of Scotland as chief mourner, with the princes and lords of the royal blood clad in black, while at the distance of two miles followed Queen Katherine and her long train of ladies.

Readers of Shakespeare will remember, in the first part of Henry the Sixth, how he makes the serving-men of the Protector Gloucester wrangle with the retainers of the bishop of Cardinal Beaufort, till tawny coat beats blue, and blue pommels tawny. Brawls like this twice took place on

London Bridge, when the proud and ambitious cardinal assembled his archers at his Bankside palace, and attempted to storm the bridge.

The dangers of shooting London Bridge were exemplified as early as 1428 (in the same reign—Henry the Sixth). The barge of the Duke of Norfolk, starting from St. Mary Overies, with many a gentleman, squire, and yeoman, about half-past four of the bell on a November afternoon, struck (through bad steering) on a starling of London Bridge, and sank. The duke and two or three other gentlemen fortunately leaped on the piles, and so were saved by ropes, cast down from the parapet above.

Several Lollards' heads had already adorned the bridge, and in 1431 the skull of a rough reformer, a weaver of Abingdon, who had threatened to make priests' heads "as plentiful as sheeps' heads," was spiked upon the battlements. The very next year the child-king, Henry the Sixth, who had been crowned at Notre Dame in 1431, entered London over this bridge. Lydgate, like a true laureate, careless who or what the new king might be, nibbed his ready pen, and was at it again with appropriate verse. At the drawbridge there was a tower, he says, hung with silk and arras, from which issued three empresses, Nature, Grace, and Fortune.

> And at his coming, of excellent beauty,
> Benign of port, most womanly of cheer,
> There issued out empresses three,
> Their hair displayed, as Phœbus in his sphere,
> With crownets of gold and stonès clear,
> At whose out-coming they gave such a light
> That the beholders were stonied in their sight.

With these empresses came fourteen crowned maidens, with blue baldrics, who presented the king with gifts, and sang a roundel of welcome.

If old London Bridge had a fault, it was, perhaps, its habit of occasionally partly falling down. This it did as early as 1437, when the great stone gate and tower on the Southwark end, with two arches, suddenly subsided into the Thames.

There was another gala day for the bridge in 1445, when the proud and impetuous William de la Pole (afterwards Duke of Suffolk) brought over Margaret, daughter of René (that weak, poetical monarch, immortalised in Anne of Geierstein), as a bride for the young king of England, and the City welcomed her on their river threshold. The Duke of Gloucester, who had opposed the match, preceded her with five hundred men clad in his ducal livery, and with gilt badges on their arms, and the mayor and aldermen rode on in scarlet, followed by the City companies in blue gowns and red hoods. Again Lydgate tuned his ready harp, and produced some certainly most unprophetic verses, in which he called the savage Margaret "the dove that brought the branch of peace,"

> Resembling your simpleness columbyne.

In 1450, and the very month after Margaret's favourite, De la Pole, had been seized in Dover Roads, and his head brutally chopped off on the side of a boat, the great insurrection, under Jack Cade, broke out in Kent. After routing a detachment of the royal troops at Sevenoaks, Cade marched towards London, and the commons of Essex mustering threateningly at Mile End, the City, after some debate, admitted Cade over London Bridge. As the rebel passed over the echoing drawbridge, he slashed in two the ropes that supported it. Three days after, the citizens, irritated at his robberies, barred up the bridge at night, and penned him close in his head-quarters at Southwark. The rebels then flew to arms—tried to force a passage, eventually winning the drawbridge, and burning many of the houses that stood in a close row upon it. Now the battle raged by St. Magnus Corner, now at the bridge foot, Southwark side, all the while the Tower guns thundering on the swarming maddened men of Kent. At nine the next morning, both sides, faint and weary, retired to their respective quarters. Soon afterwards Cade's army melted away, and Cade, himself a fugitive, was slain in a Kentish garden where he had hid himself, and his grim defaced head was placed on the very bridge gate on which he had himself but recently, in scorn and triumph, placed the ghastly head of Lord Say, the murdered Treasurer of England. Round Cade's head, when the king re-entered London, were placed the heads of eight of his captains.*

At the entry of Edward the Fourth into London, in 1461, before his coronation, he passed over London Bridge, escorted by the mayor and his fellows in scarlet, and four hundred commoners, "well horsed and clad in green." In 1471, when Henry was prisoner in the Tower, the Bastard of Falconbridge, one of the deposed king's piratical partisans, made a dash to plunder London. While three thousand of his men attacked Aldgate and Bishopsgate, the rest set fire to London Bridge, and burnt thirteen houses. But the citizens,

* See All the Year Round, New Series, vol. iii. p. 181.

led by Ralph Jocelyn, a brave draper, made a gallant defence, drove off the filibusters, and chased them to Blackwall. In 1481, another house on the bridge fell down, drowning five of its inhabitants.

The reign of Henry the Sixth brought more terrible trophies to London Bridge, for in 1496, Flamock, a lawyer, and Joseph, a farrier, of Bodmin, leaders of a great Cornish insurrection, contributed their heads to this decorative object. But Henry the Seventh was not half such a mower off of heads as that enormous Turk, his son, Henry the Eighth, who, what with the wives he grew tired of, and what with the disbelievers in his ecclesiastical supremacy, kept the headsman's axe very fairly busy. First came the prior and several unfortunate Charterhouse monks, and then the good old Bishop of Rochester, John Fisher. The parboiled head of the brave old man who would not bow the knee to Rimmon, was kept, so that Queen Anne Boleyn might enjoy the grateful sight. The face, for a fortnight, remained so ruddy and life-like, and such crowds collected to see the miracle, that the king, in a rage, at last ordered the head to be thrown down into the river. The next month came the head of a far greater and wiser man, Sir Thomas More. This sacred relic More's daughter, Margaret Roper, bribed a man to remove, and drop into a boat in which she sat, and the head was, long after, buried with her, under a chapel adjoining St. Dunstan's, Canterbury.

The year 1536, following these atrocious cruelties, was the date of one of the most interesting and one of the most authentic legends connected with old London Bridge. In this year the nursemaid of Sir William Hewet, a rich cloth-worker living on the bridge, playing with her master's little daughter out of one of the projecting windows, let the child fall into the river. Its instant death seemed certain, when Edward Osborne, a brave apprentice of Sir William's, leaped in and saved it. In due time the child so rescued grew into a blooming woman, and the belle of the bridge was courted by many great courtiers, foremost among whom was the Earl of Shrewsbury. But her father generously replied to all the amorous band, "No, Osborne saved her, and Osborne shall have her." So Osborne bore away the belle, and with her a large dowry, and in course of years Osborne became lord mayor, and was knighted by Queen Elizabeth. The great grandson of the brave apprentice was raised to the peerage by Charles the Second, and William of Orange made him the first Duke of Leeds. This Sir Edward Osborne, the antiquaries tell us, lived at his father-in-law's house in Philpot-lane, and was buried at St. Dennis, in Fenchurch-street. The Duke of Leeds still preserves, at Kiveton Castle, in Yorkshire, a fine portrait of Osborne's right-worshipful master, clad in black furred gown, scarlet doublet and sleeves, gold chain, and velvet bonnet. So, in many cases, the heraldic tree of our noblest peers has been grafted on the merchant's ink-stained deal desk.

In Queen Mary's reign there was again fighting on London Bridge. In the year 1554, when rash Sir Thomas Wyat led his four thousand Kentish men to London to stop the impending Spanish marriage, the rebel found the drawbridge cut away, the gates of London Bridge barred, and guns planted ready to receive him. Wyat and his men dug a trench at the bridge foot, and laid two guns. The night before Wyat retreated to Kingston to cross the Thames there, seven of his arquebusiers fired at a boat from the Tower and killed a waterman on board. The next morning the lieutenant of the Tower turning seven cannon on the steeples of St. Olave and St. Mary Overies, the people of Southwark begged Wyat to withdraw, which he generously did.

In Elizabeth's reign the bridge was restored with great splendour. The City built a new gate and tower three stories high at the Southwark end: a huge pile full of square Tudor windows, with a covered way below. About the same time was also reared that wonder of London, Nonesuch House, a huge wooden pile four stories high, with cupolas and turrets at each corner, brought from Holland, and erected with wooden pegs instead of nails. It stood over the seventh and eighth arches, on the north side of the drawbridge. There were carved wooden galleries outside the long lines of transom-casements, and the panels between were richly carved and gilt. In the same reign Peter Moris, a Dutchman, established a waterworks on the north end of London Bridge, and, long before this, corn mills had been erected at the south end of the same over-taxed structure. The contemporaries of great Queen Bess saw on the Traitor's Gate, among sheaves of hangman's trophies, the head of the Irish Earl of Desmond and eleven standards plucked from the Spanish Armada. In the next reign, after the Gunpowder Plot, Father Garnet's head was added to the horrible collection on the bridge.

In 1632, forty-two houses on the north

side of the bridge were destroyed by a fire occasioned by a careless servant setting a tub of hot ashes under a staircase, and the Great Fire of 1666 destroyed several houses on the same side of the bridge. There are several old proverbs about London Bridge still extant. Two of these—"If London Bridge had fewer eyes it would see better," and "London Bridge was made for wise men to go over, and fools to go under"—point to the danger of the old passage past the starlings. The old bridge had now become terribly ruinous. Pennant describes the street as being dark, narrow, and dangerous; the houses overhung the road in such a terrific manner as almost to hide the arches. Arches of timber crossed the street to keep the houses from falling on each other. "Nothing but use," says that agreeable writer, "could preserve the repose of the inmates, who soon grew deaf to the noise of the falling waters, the clamour of watermen, or the frequent shrieks of drowning wretches." Most of the bridge houses were tenanted by pin or needle makers, and economical ladies were wont to drive from the St. James's end of the town to make cheap purchases.

After being widened in the reigns of James the Second and William, the chapel and all the houses on the bridge were removed in 1757. During these repairs three pots of money of Elizabeth's time were found in the ruins. In 1758, a temporary wooden bridge, built over the Thames while the repairs of the old bridge were going on, was destroyed by fire, it was supposed by some footman in passing dropping his link among the woodwork. Messrs. Taylor and Dance, the repairers, chopped the old bridge in two, and built a new centre arch; but the join was so insecure, that few persons would venture over it. The celebrated Smeaton was called in, in 1761, and he advised the Corporation to buy back the stone of the old City gates, pulled down and sold the year before, to strengthen the shaky starlings. This was done, but proved a mere makeshift, and in 1768 the starlings again became loose, and an incessant wail of fresh complaints perpetually arose. The repairs were calculated at two thousand five hundred pounds yearly, and it was rather unfeelingly computed that fifty watermen, bargemen, or seamen, valued at twenty thousand pounds, were annually drowned in passing the dangerous bridge. In 1823, the City, in sheer desperation, resolved on a new bridge, one hundred feet westward of the old, and in 1824 Mr. Rennie began the work by removing one hundred and eighty-two houses. The earlier bridges had been still further eastward, facing St. Botolph's. During the excavations coins were discovered of Augustus, Vespasian, and later Roman emperors, besides Nuremberg tokens and tradesmen's tokens. There were also dredged up brass rings, buckles, iron keys, silver spoons, a gilt dagger, an iron spear-head, some carved stones, a bronze lamp, with a head of Bacchus, and a silver effigy of Harpocrates, the God of Silence. This figure having attached to it a large gold ring, and a chain of pure gold, is supposed to have been a priest's amulet to be worn at religious ceremonies. The bridge cost five hundred and six thousand pounds. The first stone was laid in June, 1825, by the Right Honourable John Garratt, Lord Mayor, the Duke of York being present.

Among the celebrated persons who have resided on London Bridge may be mentioned, among the most eminent, Hans Holbein, the great painter of Henry the Eighth's court; Peter Monamy, the marine painter, apprenticed to a sign-painter on the bridge—he died in 1749; Jack Laguerre, the humourist, singer, player, and scene-painter, son of the Laguerre satirised by Pope; and Crispin Tucker, a waggish bookseller and author, who was intimate with Pope and Swift, and who lived under the southern gate, in a rickety bow-windowed shop, where Hogarth, when young, and engraving for old John Bowles, of the Black Horse, Cornhill, had once resided.

One anecdote of the old bridge must not be forgotten. Mr. Baldwin, haberdasher, living in the house over the chapel, was ordered, when an old man of seventy-one, to go to Chislehurst for change of air. But the invalid found he could not sleep in the country for want of the roar and rush of the tide under the old ruinous arches. In 1798 the chapel was turned into a paper warehouse. Within legal memory, says the Morning Advertiser of that date, "service has been performed there every Sabbath and saint's day."

A GIRL'S STORY.

Yes, truly all my dream is o'er, and I have lived the fairest part
Of this world's life, yet evermore there bideth something in my heart,
That like a restless child doth cry, unsoothed by any lullaby.

So lonely were the years I'd spent, since long ago she went from me,
My mother; ah! how different my life had been, watched o'er by thee!
Untaught, uncared for, and so young, alas! what wonder that I clung

To him? 'Twas just when passing spring and rosy
summer from the south,
Beside the hedgerows blossoming kissed one another
mouth to mouth,
Just in those perfect Eden hours, I saw him first among
the flowers.

And then, in woodlands scarce half-lit by the white
radiance of the moon,
We met; and 'neath some tree would sit, where, shaded
from the glowing noon,
We held sweet talk, or kept at will a musing silence,
sweeter still.

Or he, with low voice, oftentimes would read from some
immortal book
Quaint, tender fancies, poet rhymes. The silver ripple
of the brook,
The soft low breeze, the songs of birds made fitting
music for the words.

Oh, heart, it was no dream! E'en now 'tis present, and
I see and hear
The gold light flickering through the bough above my
head, his voice so clear;
Upon my lips I feel his kiss, upon my hand the touch
of his.

Oh summer time of happiness! Oh words so beautiful
and new!
Oh fond and lingering caress! how could I deem you
all untrue?
Oh dear, dear love, it seems so strange, so pitiful, that
you could change.

Forgive him! do you bid me? Nay, but there is
nothing to forgive;
I love him still, did not I say? I needs must love him
while I live.
This dear, sad memory, I think, will haunt me even to
the brink

Of yonder land. But then no more! Oh quiet home,
the weariest
Lay down their burdens at thy door, and find in thee
eternal rest.
Thank God no cloud of earth shall dim the beauty of
our life with Him!

SEERS AND OVER-SEERS.

THE wholesome custom of, so to speak, checking man's current account with time, by summarising, at the close of every year, the events that period has brought forth, presents other advantages beyond those of refreshing the general memory, or aiding the after historian. Affording the opportunity of comparing what has actually happened with what was confidently foretold, it imposes a healthful check upon man's arrogant judgment, and reminds him upon how minute a pivot the whole cycle of events may turn. If it be wise to call no man happy till he is dead, it is scarcely less prudent to be certain of nothing till it has come to pass. For, unless the eye of human prescience were microscopic, as well as far-seeing, the whole prophetic structure must, of necessity, be at heart unsound, and, at all events, of no higher value than the testimony of a discreet witness, who swears "to the best of his judgment and belief."

It is the common failing of our unaccredited seers to be rather too positive. But, what help? Who would care twopence about a hesitating augury? Any man can say he "thinks." It seems to be accepted, as best, to adopt a bold, sonorous ring in these pronouncements, calculated at once to confound the sceptical, and awe into silence those more curious persons who would pry into the sources of the seer's foreknowledge.

That not a few of these plungers into futurity have brought up pearls, is undeniable. In a former article* we have already given some specimens of these, and now, commencing with the remark that no political inference whatever is intended to be suggested in the examples that may be given, we propose to place before the reader certain other examples of authentic prophecies, which, in the whirligig of time, have to all appearance reached their realisation, against all rational probability, viewed from the prophet's time, that such would be the case.

We will have nothing to say, at present, to the too prolific seers—men who had a sort of flux of prophecy, and who, like Nostradamus, whose vaticinations embraced two thousand years, foresaw a confused assemblage of things, among which some children of the future were born sound and fair. The seer, in large practice, resembles the fashionable physician, who, if he has more patients than his brethren, undoubtedly loses more. We will begin with the bards of small but distinct utterance, confident that what success has actually attended their foreshadowings will be a sufficient excuse for reproducing the little they as certainly did say.

Germany is by no means deficient in seers. We will not dwell much upon Joseph von Görres, whose death-bed prophecy, in January, 1848, was declared and believed to have embodied the then undeclared revolution in Poland, describing Hungary as one vast field of carnage, prefiguring the insurrection in Posen, the devastations committed by the Prussians in suppressing it, and finally the downfall of European monarchies. The last portion was considered as realised by the events in Paris, following in the same year.

To the warning of events so near fulfilment, it is impossible to accord the dignity of prophecy, and we record it only in deference to the remarkable sensation created by it in Germany at the time.

Jaspers, otherwise the "Westphalian Shepherd," testified in 1830.

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. iv. p. 132.

Jaspers was a simple cottager, a respectable and religious man, thoughtful, as are many of his calling, and not given to unconsidered speech, or, indeed, any—if he could help it—nevertheless, a short time before his death, which occurred in the same year, 1830, he publicly announced as follows:

"A great road will be carried through our country, from west to east, through the forests of Bodelschwing. On this, carriages will run without horses, and cause a dreadful noise."

It need hardly be mentioned that, at this period, no railway had been laid down, even in England. The prophet was right, however, the rail from Cologne to Minden running right through the very district indicated.

Invited to foretell his country's political future, Jaspers, for a long time, maintained an obstinate silence. At last he opened his lips; only, however, to declare that Frederick William the Fourth would be the last King of Prussia.

May it not be said that the events of the past year have confirmed this prophecy, the kingly title being merged in the imperial?

Jaspers' third and last prophecy was:

"The German Empire shall choose a peasant for ruler. He shall govern Germany for a year and a day."

If this have reference to events already past, a coincidence may be found in the regency of the Archduke John. He had married a Styrian peasant, and adopted the costume and manners of the class, but, notwithstanding, exercised the functions of regent during the period specified.

In regard to the assumption of the imperial title, perhaps foreshadowed in Jaspers' second prophecy, it is a singular fact that one Pottgiesser, who died, long since, in Dortmund—having enjoyed some repute as a seer—drew up a genealogical tree of the royal house, and, on arriving at the present monarch, simply wrote, "Er verschwindt." (He disappears.)

A certain gentleman, affectionately known as the "Youth of Elsen," uttered many prognostications touching the fate of nations and communities, many of which, corroborated in substance by a subsequent seer, Hermann Kappelmann, justified the prophet's assertions.

But of the seers of the Fatherland, none stood forth so prominently as Margaretta Stoffell, or Stoffler, whose declarations, reduced to writing, obtained at once a wide publicity.

Vaticination appears to have been traditional in Margaretta's family, an ancestor of hers, who flourished as far back as 1452, having united with the study of mathematics, of which he was professor at Tuberingen, that of astrology. To that fanciful source must be ascribed his many and intrepid predictions, as also their almost invariable collapse! Monsieur Stoffler certainly caused the great sensation of his day by announcing, in set terms, a most fearful deluge, to come off in 1524.

All Germany began to tremble as the time drew near. Ships were building in all directions. Towns, far in the interior, began to bristle with unfamiliar masts. Rafts, of tremendous size and improved sea-going qualities, were hastily put together. The maritime service became singularly popular, and received an impulse which was sensibly felt, long after the necessity had passed away. For nothing of the sort occurred. "On n'en fût pas affligé," wrote a grateful historian. Monsieur Stoffler admitted that he had overlooked a little point in his calculation, which vitiated the whole.

His last prophecy was destined to come true, or nearly so. He had predicted his own death by a "fall." Being one day, in February, 1531, engaged in a warm philosophical dispute, he started up to take down a volume that supported his views. Unfortunately the shelf came with it, and striking Stoffler on the head inflicted an injury that resulted in his death.

The predictions of Margaretta Stoffell were of a different character. The work in which they were embodied, exactly as delivered, at Christmas, 1847, was prepared by Doctor Edward Brann, physician of the Royal Imperial Austrian Court of Justice. It was entitled Nine Years of the Future, the whole being destined to fulfilment between 1847 and 1856. It was translated by M. Elias Schneider.

The publication was suppressed in Austria, but the book had a brisk sale in Switzerland, and an American gentleman of note informs us that many copies were in circulation at Pottsville and other cities, previous to the breaking out of the French Revolution of 1848.

It was subsequently published in Philadelphia, by L. A. Wollenweber, who, on being applied to for information as to dates, replied that he received a copy of the pamphlet from Germany in February, 1848.

There is, consequently, evidence enough to show that the prediction was, without

question, uttered at a period when the thrones of Europe appeared most stable, and when not the most distant growl of revolution had made itself heard.

No importance was, however, attached to it at the time. The pamphlet shortly died out of sight, as unworthy of notice, until the events that rapidly followed revived the recollection.

PROPHECY OF MARGARETTA STOFFELL.

"The year (1847) is past, a year which produced many a tear, and in which many a tear was also wiped away, and many an unbelieving heart directed to Him who turneth the heart as the rivers of earth.

"But repent, for the night cometh. Soon the cholera will rage throughout Europe with fury unexampled as yet.

"A great revolution will break out in France. The king" (Louis Philippe) "and his family will be compelled to leave their country, and a war will commence against the noble and the wealthy. Many capitalists will leave France, where an attempt will be made to destroy the power of money by abolishing usury. The Jews shall also suffer much at this time, and the wealthiest among them will become a victim of the enraged multitude. There will arise a governing power of the working class, but, after a short continuance, will disappear in the midst of war with foreign powers.

"Then a conservative party will reach the summit of power, in France, under whose direction she will again slowly recover, but only after bloody confusion.

"From thenceforth there shall be no kings in France. But a certain prince shall attempt to erect for himself a throne. He shall, however, atone for his foolish undertaking, and will lose his life thereby.

"Spain and Portugal will be rent with bloody civil wars. Then a man gifted with intellectual powers, rarely united in one person, shall come upon the arena of life and give to these distracted people the boon of peace. Spain and Portugal shall lose their names, and, united as the Pyrenean Republic, become great and powerful by land and sea."

(It is not without some patriotic qualms that we attend Mademoiselle Stoffell in her investigations as to the future of our own cherished land. But, courage! Forewarned, forearmed!)

"In Great Britain the distress of the working classes will increase continually. Great Britain, the world mistress of commerce, will receive an irresistible shock. Her great possessions in America and Asia will declare independence. Her fleets will be annihilated in a great sea-fight. After many vicissitudes she will again become tranquil, but will not any longer be more powerful than other nations. Royalty will be abolished, but" (this is satisfactory, as evincing the firm hold maintained by the descendants of our gracious sovereign on the loyalty of England) "much later than in the other states of Europe."

(The next prediction is distinct enough, and well worth remembrance.)

"A great revolution will occur in Italy. A storm will pass over the land, before which the Austrians will disappear like chaff. The different states of Italy will unite in one great nation, and Rome will again become its capital.

"The Christian religion will have to strive with atheism. Men will pronounce it a worn-out thing, and faith in a divine Saviour will decay. But a new defender shall appear, and the worldly power of the Pope be destroyed for ever."

(The consolidation of the new German Empire is scarcely so complete as Prince von Bismarck no doubt believes. It is true there is no precise date mentioned, but——)

"Germany will be the scene of the most fearful events. A destructive war will rage from one end of the land to the other. Remote eastern nations shall be invited by a German monarch to assist him, but west and south shall rise against these barbarous allies, and, on the banks of a great river, the eastern hordes shall be put to the sword. A great German city—mighty as Babylon—shall be burned to the ground, and sown with salt. None shall live there more.

"Poland shall rise, and the Vistula leave upon its blood-stained banks corpses enough to fatten all the ravens of the world for one hundred years!

"The kings of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway will resign their crowns voluntarily, and these lands, forming a Scandinavian republic, will materially promote the overthrow of the Russian Empire, against which west and south once more combine. Thousands upon thousands shall advance towards the assembly of the eastern hordes. Upon a plain, from whose centre the eye sees no limit, there shall be a battle of eight days, wherein the eastern armies shall at length be defeated and destroyed.

"It will be the greatest battle ever fought by man, and also the last. For now will

commence the kingdom of God upon earth, the kingdom of love and justice, in which names all nations will thenceforth unite in brotherhood."

Lactantius, sometimes styled the "Christian Cicero," delivers a prophecy (De vitâ Beatâ, lib. 7), so singularly applicable to the First Napoleon as to be worth disinterring.

After foretelling civil discords, ruinous wars, vast standing armies, &c., he proceeds:

"But then shall there rise up a most puissant military chieftain, of obscure birth, who will have acceded to him a fellowship with the other sovereigns or the earth.

"This man shall harass the world with an insupportable despotism. He will confound and commix all things spiritual and temporal. He will be for ever restlessly revolving new schemes, in order to affix the imperial crown over all, in his own name and possession. He will change former laws, and sanction a code of his own. He will pillage and lay waste, will change names and titles, and establish the seat of empire."

That very singular work, the Previsions of Orval, revealed by God to a Solitary, made its appearance in 1544, and was supposed to have been penned by Philip Olivarius, a monk of Orval-Trèves. We will select from the predictions those which may be supposed to apply to more recent times in France, especially the First Empire.

THE ORVAL PREVISIONS.

"At that time a young man shall come from beyond sea into Celtic Gaul, and show himself great in counsel. But the mighty, to whom he causes fear, will send him to the land of captivity. Victory will attend him back. He will overpower the sons of Brutus, and take the name of emperor. Many mighty kings will fear, for the eagle will carry off many crowns and sceptres.

"Men on foot and horse, bearing blood-stained eagles, will run with him throughout Europe, which will be filled with consternation and carnage.

"But all is over. The mighty one is blinded for his crimes. He leaves his great city with an army so vast that none ever was comparable to it. But no warrior can withstand the power of the Almighty, and lo! the third part, and again the third part, of his army has perished by the cold of God! The mighty that have been humbled take courage, and combine against the man of power. He returns, humbled, whence he came. Gaul is covered with men and with machines of war. All is finished with the Man of the Sea."

(The following is said to designate the Bourbon line and rule, including the reign of Louis Philippe.)

"Behold, again returns the ancient blood of the Cap! Great peace throughout Celtic Gaul. The white flower is greatly in honour, but the sons of Brutus view it angrily, and God is offended because the holy day is much profaned. Nevertheless, He will await a return to Him during eighteen times twelve moons."

(The period we have mentioned lasted eighteen years.)

"A great conspiracy against the white flower moves in the dark, and the old blood of the Caps abandons the great city."

(The following was, long before the fall of the Second Empire, imagined to apply to Louis Napoleon and his times.)

"Woe to Celtic Gaul! The cock will efface the white flower, and a powerful one will call himself the monarch of the people. But the opinions of the men of Celtic Gaul are in collision, and confusion is in all minds. The king of the people will be found very weak. Many of the wicked will be against him. But he was ill-seated, and lo! God hurls him down. Great God! What a noise of arms! A year is not completed, and, behold! many warriors are coming!

"It is done! The mountain of the Lord hath cried in its affliction unto God. He is no longer deaf. What fire accompanies his arrows! Ten times six moons, and yet again six times ten moons, have fed his wrath. Woe to the great city! Behold the kings armed by the Lord! Already has fire levelled thee with the earth. Yet the faithful shall not perish. The place of crime is purified by fire. Gaul, dismembered as it were, is about to reunite. God loves peace. Come, young prince, quit the isle of exile. Listen! from the lion to the white flower."

(If, in the fulness of time, that is, after ten years, the time indicated by the hundred and twenty moons, Henry of Bourbon, the last bud of the white flower, should be recalled to France, the last "prevision" will be singular enough. A great ruler is finally foretold for that distracted nation.)

"A sole shepherd will appear in Celtic Gaul. The man made powerful by God will be firmly seated. So sage and prudent will be the offspring of the Cap, that God

will be thought to be with him. Three kings and princes abandon heresy, and open their eyes to the true faith of the Lord. At that time, two-thirds of a great people of the sea shall return to the true faith.

"The white flower becomes obscured, during" (a period equal to fifteen years), "then it shall disappear, to be seen no more. Many cities perish by fire. Israel returns entirely to Christ the Lord. The third part of Gaul will be without faith. The same among other nations. There is a general falling off, and the end of time has begun. After a number, not complete, of moons, God will combat by His two just ones. But all is over. The mighty God has placed before my comprehension a wall of fire. I can see no more.

"May He be evermore blessed. Amen."

Towards the close of the last century some attention was called to a series of predictions, the precise authorship of which was never disclosed. It was generally believed, however, to have proceeded from a priest of the Jesuists, resident at Bordeaux, who died there between 1780 and 1790, and was consequently known under the designation of—

THE JESUIT PRIEST'S PROPHECY.

"Then shall come disturbances in France. A name hateful to the country shall be placed upon the throne. It will be done by strangers. But two parties will first be formed in France, and there will be a war of extermination. The weaker shall prevail. Blood will flow in the great towns, but the wicked will not prevail, and there shall perish of them a vast multitude. They will have thought utterly to destroy the Church, but for this they will not have time, for the fearful crisis shall be of short duration. During this convulsion, which shall not affect France alone, Paris shall be so utterly destroyed, that when fathers shall walk with their children, and the children shall ask, 'Why is that desolate spot?' they shall answer, 'My children, there once stood a great city, which God destroyed for its crimes.'

"After this fearful convulsion, all will return to order, and the counter-revolution shall be made. Then shall the triumph of the Church be such that nothing like it shall be ever seen again, for it will be the last triumph of the Church on earth."

Let us conclude with the previsions of two gentlemen, who, though not "among the prophets," are entitled to respectful attention, Moreau and Montesquieu.

A gentleman, well known in New York, mentioned to the writer that he chanced, in 1812, to find himself the travelling companion of the celebrated general, then on a tour of the States. Much interesting discourse had naturally passed from Mr. D.'s memory, but one remark of Moreau, as taking the form of a prophecy, made a more than usually profound impression.

"Will the States flourish as a republic?" asked the younger politician.

"Not permanently," replied Moreau, emphatically. "As a growing country, yes; but when it has reached a population of from fifty to one hundred millions, a change becomes inevitable. This vast increase must comprise that which we, with scant politeness, term canaille. This canaille is the rude but only material of which standing armies are formed. The material on hand, the need of using it is not so long a step as it may appear. Questions arise among yourselves. Foreign relations become complicated. Your augmented importance justifies a change of attitude towards powerful neighbours. A standing army is decreed. This, in turn, creates ambitious leaders. Death, thenceforth, to the true republican principle! Monarchy, the mere embodiment of a power to which the national will already inclines, is the inevitable result."

"And within what period can one predict so vast a population to be assembled in these States?"

"Within fifty years," said Moreau.

Ten years have passed since the period named. But then the speaker omitted from his prophetic scheme the "annexation," which supplies better employment for a profuse population than war.

As for Montesquieu, his terse prediction, "La France se perdra par ses gens de guerre," may, during the past year, have recurred with some significance to the reader's mind.

LOST EXPLORERS.

THE LONG-LOST.

MANY as are the points of interest presented by the journeys noticed in the former article, where the truth concerning the travellers soon became known, much more impressive, so far as concerns the effect of narratives upon the reader (though not necessarily so in regard to the trials and sufferings under which the explorers sank), are those eventful journeys in which the fate of the travellers remains unknown

throughout a long series of years. The painful curiosity felt during the interval is an addition to the pain felt when the truth is really known. One prolonged anxiety, neither removed nor intensified by any receipt of authentic information, is that which is associated with really lost explorers, those whose fate remains for ever unknown. But of this last class the instances are very few; the missing, if they do not reach us alive, can at any rate be generally traced to some one place and some one date where and when death ensued. It is this, above any other thing, that gives Englishmen hopes of Livingstone; until they *know* that he is dead they will believe that he still lives.

Among the most famous of our travellers was Mungo Park, on account of the novelty and importance of the journeys which he made, and of the personal characteristics of the traveller himself. One of the geographical mysteries of past times was the existence of a great city, Timbuctoo, on the banks of a great river, the Niger. The English thought the known river Gambia might possibly be the outlet of the Niger, while the French selected the known river Senegal; and traders belonging to both countries made many voyages up these two rivers, to test the rival theories, but they met with no Timbuctoo, no Niger. Whether the Niger is the upper part of the Nile, or flows to some outlet on the west coast of Africa, or loses itself in some great marsh or lake in the centre of the continent, remained an unsolved problem. Mungo Park was employed to solve it. He had been an assistant-surgeon on board an East Indiaman, and was now fitted out for his new enterprise at the cost of the African Association. He started in 1795, remained a few months near the mouth of the Gambia, and penetrated into the interior in 1796. Robbed of most of the commodities he had taken with him, imprisoned by a chieftain on the borders of the great Desert of Sahara, and treated with much cruelty, he at length reached Sego, the capital of Bambarra, where he saw the Joliba, a river as broad as the Thames at Westminster Bridge. He at once concluded it to be the Niger, of which he was in search; he hit on the truth, but did not know at what part of the African coast its waters reached the sea. What he underwent in his venturesome journey, on and by the side of this river, can only be appreciated by a perusal of his narrative, one of the best books of travel in the English language; stripped of almost everything, he made his way as best he could, found reason to believe that the great river has its mouth at a part of the west coast, far south of the Gambia and Senegal, and returned safely in 1797. One fact impressed on his mind was, that the negro tribes were much less cruel to him than such of the natives as were of Moorish descent.

Strengthened by a few years of quiet life at home, Mungo Park started off again in the spring of 1805, with the hope of tracing the great river down to its outlet, wherever that might be. With about fifty companions he sailed up the Gambia, as far as a town called Kayee, along a route not till then known to him or to any European. The hot season and the insalubrity of the climate told so severely on the explorers, that by the end of August three-fourths of them had either died or had abandoned the enterprise. Park reached the great river, however, and succeeded in obtaining leave from the King of Bambarra to fit up a canoe as a vessel suitable for sailing down the river; this vessel he named His Majesty's ship Joliba. A narrative from his pen, brought to Europe by one of his companions, described all the proceedings down to November the 17th; the fatal sequel of the story came to light by degrees, and from other quarters. He had only five Europeans now with him; but the last words ever received from him betokened his undaunted resolution: "Though I were myself half dead, I would still persevere; and if I could not succeed in the object of my journey, I would at last die on the Niger." His words were fulfilled. It was not until five years afterwards, in 1810, that the truth was known in England. The little party reached Timbuctoo, and sailed in safety some way beyond it, down the river. Here, however, a present, which was sent to propitiate a king or powerful chief in Housa, or Houssa, was appropriated by an inferior leader; and the enraged king sent an army to destroy the vessel and its hapless navigators. One Isaaco, a Mandingo priest and merchant, who had accompanied Park in his former journey, and who was now the means of collecting facts relating to the final tragedy, reported that "there is, before Houssa, a rock, extending across the river, with only one opening in it, in the form of a door, for the water to pass through. The king's men took possession of the top of this rock, until Park came up to it and attempted to pass. The natives

attacked him and his friends with lances, pikes, arrows, and other missiles. Park defended himself vigorously for a long time; but at last, after throwing everything in the canoe overboard, being overpowered by numbers, and seeing no chance of getting the canoe past, he took hold of one of the white men and jumped into the river; Martyn did the same; and the whole were drowned in their attempt to escape by swimming. One black remained in the canoe, the other two being killed; and he cried for mercy. The canoe fell into the hands of the natives. Amadi Fatouma (a guide, who was not present at this final scene), on being freed from his irons, three months afterwards, ascertained these facts from the native who had survived the catastrophe."

Leichhardt—shall we ever know where and when he died? Friedrich Wilhelm Ludwig Leichhardt was a Prussian, who went to Australia just about thirty years ago, and rambled about in search of natural history specimens. In 1844-45 he made a venturesome journey from the east coast to the north coast of that country, under the patronage of Governor Sir Thomas Mitchell. He went where no European had ever before been, and did his work well; but, during three thousand miles of travel, he suffered terrible privations. So far from being tired out, however, he started off again, in the very next year, on a much more daring expedition—to cross the whole breadth of Australia from east to west, striking as near to the actual centre as he could. The last that was heard of him was in April, 1848. How far he penetrated, when and how he died, perhaps we shall never know; for all his companions seem to have perished with him. Once now and then, the Australian newspapers give bits of rumour about relics of poor Leichhardt; but they fail of verification when tested. The belief is that he perished far in the interior of the vast continent, at some point which no other white man has ever visited.

Whether La Pérouse was entrapped and murdered by South Sea aborigines, or whether he and his men found a watery grave by shipwreck, is not certainly known. In 1787, with the good ships Bussole and Astrolabe, M. De la Pérouse (or Peyrouse) left France on a voyage of discovery to the South Seas. He refitted at Sydney, in 1788, at the very time when Governor Phillip was establishing our first colony in those regions. The two ships started, but not a single man of either crew was ever again heard of. The intention announced was to visit the Friendly Islands, New Guinea, and Van Diemen's Land. No news of the expedition having reached France, Admiral D'Entrecasteaux was despatched on a voyage of search, 1792-93: fruitlessly. Years rolled on, and the mysterious fate of La Pérouse and his companions excited much interest, and became the theme of poets, stories, and laments. Long afterwards, Captain Dillon, in command of an East Indiaman, called at Tucopia, one of the New Hebrides Islands, in 1826. He found a silver sword-hilt, and other articles of French make, and learned from the natives that two ships had been wrecked at Mallicolo, another island in the group, nearly forty years before, leaving numerous fragments on the beach. Taking up this as a clue, the French government sent out M. Dumont d'Urville in the following year, to make researches. At Mallicolo he found several articles of European manufacture, in the possession of the natives; who, after some reluctance, and under the temptation of a gift of a piece of red cloth, pointed out a spot where anchors, canvas, and ship-sheathing lay near the dry land, at a depth of about twenty feet in the sea. The tradition among the natives was that, on a certain dark and stormy night, the ships struck; that one speedily sunk, and only thirty of the crew were saved; that the other went to pieces, but without entailing the loss of her crew; that the survivors used up the shattered timbers to build a schooner, which work occupied them seven moons or months; that they sailed away, and were never more seen. Therefore, whether the hapless commander lost his life at Mallicolo, or in some other part of the vast Pacific, we shall probably never know.

Nothing can more clearly show the difference between intense cold and intense heat, especially when the latter is accompanied by damp vapours, on the human frame, than the small sacrifice of life among the explorers of the icy regions, compared with that which has marked the course of African travel. During the fifty or sixty years of voyaging, boating, sledging, and foot-wandering that have been experienced by Parry, the two Rosses, Richardson, Back, Hood, Franklin, Lyon, Crozier, Fitz-James, Kellett, Moore, Richardson, Rae, Collinson, M'Clure, Penny, Austin, M'Clintock, Sherard Osborn, Inglefield, Belcher, Kane, and others, the loss of life has really been very small, notwithstanding the

almost incredible hardships undergone. Ships and boats have been abandoned in great number; but the commanders and crews have, by some means or other, contrived to reach home in safety, with only a few exceptions. The great loss is that of Sir John Franklin, with the whole of his officers and men. He had already known what privation is, in an earlier journey. In 1820, and two following years, he and his party went from the Hudson's Bay Company's territories to the icy regions and back again, in boat and on foot, a distance of more than five thousand miles. During the last days of their return journey they fed upon the few wretched bits of scanty lichen which they could grub up from the ground; and on one particular day "they ate the remains of their old shoes, and whatever scraps of leather they had, to strengthen their stomachs for the fatigues of the journey." Still they *did* return. That which is known as the Franklin Expedition, so many features of which are involved in mystery, and the interest in which has by no means died out, was later in date by a quarter of a century. Twenty-seven years ago, that is in 1845, Sir John Franklin, Captain Crozier, and Captain Fitz-James, with crews of a hundred and thirty men, set sail in the Erebus and Terror, each ship provided with a small steam-engine and propeller for occasional use, and with every necessary and comfort that forethought and liberality could suggest. In July of the same year the ships were seen moored to an iceberg in Baffin's Bay, the opening scene of most of the Arctic expeditions; but, so far as is known, no white man ever again saw the explorers alive. The ships were stored for five years; still it occasioned surprise that no news reached England from them throughout 1846 and 1847.

The Admiralty, rendered anxious by this ominous silence, resolved to send out searching-parties. Never has been known a more remarkable and determined series of voyages and journeys than those which are collectively known, and deservedly known, as the Search for Franklin. First, in 1848, was sent out the Plover, under Captain Maguire, to go as far as he could in the direction supposed to have been taken by Franklin. Second, in the winter of the same year, Captains Kellett and Moore were sent to Behring's Straits, to explore from that region north-eastward. Third, in 1849, Sir John Richardson and Doctor Rae started off to examine the shores of the Arctic Sea, near the mouth of the Mackenzie River. Fourth, Sir James Ross went to search in the creeks and nooks near Lancaster Sound. No tidings of Franklin having been met with by any of these explorers, redoubled efforts were made in 1850. No less than eight expeditions were sent out. Captains Collinson and M'Clure, to Behring's Straits; Sir John Ross, to Wellington Channel; Captains Penny and Stewart, to Lancaster Sound; other vessels, under Captains Austin, Ommaney, M'Clintock, Osborn, and Forsyth, in various directions. The Americans lent a kindly aid, by sending out an expedition under Lieutenant de Haven. Another year came, and 1851 witnessed a new series of expeditions. Rae started on an overland journey, to reach the icy regions by way of the Esquimaux country; Kennedy went to Regent's Inlet, Inglefield to Baffin's Bay, Belcher to Wellington Channel, Pullen to Beechey Island, Osborn to Wellington Channel, Kellett and M'Clintock to Melville Island. All these brave men were encouraged to add to the previously acquired stock of knowledge concerning the geography and hydrography of those desolate regions, but were at the same time told that their chief duty was to search for Franklin. The year 1853 was marked by the starting of other expeditions, under Trollope and Kennedy, to Behring's Straits, Inglefield to Wellington Channel, and Kane to Smith's Sound. After these, at various intervals, other searching parties set forth; Mr. Anderson went from the Hudson's Bay territories to the Esquimaux regions; Captain M'Clintock explored in and around King William's Island; other navigators have pursued the search from time to time; while Mr. Hall, an American, has made repeated journeys to Esquimaux regions where he thought information might be picked up.

What, then, is the sum total of our present knowledge of the gallant old Sir John's fate? We say old, for he was an elderly man when he started, with a constitution much weakened by maladies and fatigues in earlier life. Some of the searches made in 1850-51 brought to light scraps of paper, empty meat-tins, sheds in which smiths and carpenters had evidently worked, the graves of three sailors of the Erebus and Terror, and other relics, sufficient to show that Franklin had passed the winter of 1845-46 in Wellington Channel. The next information obtained was more important, and far more tragical. Doctor Rae, one of the most skilful and intrepid of the Hudson's Bay Company's officers,

went overland to the peninsula of Boothia, where he found that the Esquimaux had in their possession articles of plate once evidently belonging to some of Franklin's officers. They told a story of two ships having been wrecked among the ice, and of dead bodies presenting signs of having been partly eaten by famishing men. Rae was unable to learn anything further. When the direful news reached England an earnest desire was evinced to follow up the clue—not by the Government, who were unwilling to incur further expenditure, but by Lady Franklin and the public. The overcoming of numberless difficulties at length enabled Captain M'Clintock, in 1859, to discover, on King William's Island, buttons and medals once belonging to Franklin's men; then a skeleton, with scraps of clothing around it; then a heap of stones, in which was a copper cylinder containing a written paper; and around the spot a confused heap of clothing, stores, and instruments. The paper, unquestionably authentic, and of intense interest, recorded the fact that Franklin wintered in 1845-46 at Beechey Island, and in 1846-47 on or near King William's Land; that in June, 1847, Sir John died, worn out; that in April, 1848, Captain Crozier, and the remainder of the crews (of whom more than one hundred still lived) abandoned the ships, which had been hopelessly locked up in the ice for more than a year and a half. Here the narrative ended; but it appears pretty certain that Crozier and his men meant to try, by sledging, boating, and walking, to reach some of the trading ports of the Hudson's Bay Company. Armed with this sad news, M'Clintock resolved to make a little further search. He found a boat mounted on a sledge, portions of two skeletons in the boat, and near at hand, boots, slippers, watches, guns, books, and various trifling articles. This was obviously only the beginning of a series of tragic scenes; but M'Clintock, anxious to make known what he had discovered, returned to England in 1859. Thirteen years have since elapsed, and a few further discoveries have been made; but many amongst us, especially his noble-hearted widow, feel that there ought still to be other things achieved, in search of Franklin's papers and relics.

A comparison: Sir John Franklin, we know from these sad but scanty records, died in a little more than two years after leaving England for the last time. The indomitable Livingstone, we know from scattered data, was living five years after *his* departure to a very different region. Livingstone is even now several years younger than Franklin was at the time of his death; he has an iron constitution; and so far as mens' speculations are worth anything, we shall see him again.

LELGARDE'S INHERITANCE.

IN TWELVE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

We were sitting over the fire, my sister Lelgarde and I, in our London lodgings, she busy with the scraps of velvet and satin which grew, under her fingers, into all sorts of pretty saleable devices, I leaning back in an arm-chair, tired out, after a long day spent in trying to drive the rudiments of grammar and arithmetic into unwilling little heads. I remember that I was feeling very doleful that foggy November evening—I had heard that some of the families where I daily gave lessons were going away, and another, on whose payment I had reckoned, had disappointed me, so that I looked forward with unusual dread to Monday morning and its weekly bills; and as I watched my Lelgarde's slender fingers and graceful bending head, it seemed more than ever cruel that her young life should be passed in this long grind of poverty. Suddenly she looked up and spoke:

"Joan, do you recollect what happens next Tuesday?"

"What happened on that day one-and-twenty years ago, you mean, do you not?" I responded, with a recollection of the tiny red morsel which I, a ten years' old child, had then held so proudly and carefully in my arms.

"What happens next Tuesday? Do you call my coming of age nothing?"

Bless her, poor darling! What was the use of coming of age with nothing to come to? But I was not going to sadden her, so I swallowed my sigh as I had swallowed plenty before it. She went on:

"Joan, I should like to do something on my birthday—something grand."

"If I can get an hour in the afternoon, we might go to the Kensington Museum," I suggested, that being hitherto our wildest dream of dissipation.

Lelgarde made a little rebellious face, and shook her head.

"Won't that do? What then? Only remember, it must be cheap."

"Might we not invite Harry Goldie to tea?" asked Lelgarde, glancing half timidly, half mischievously in my face.

I tried to look wise.

"Harry Goldie, my dear, is a young

man," I said, severely; at which she broke into one of her rare peals of laughter.

"Nobody can deny that, Joan; but what follows?"

"Why, it follows, my dear, that you being a young woman, and I not a very old one, I think Harry Goldie will be just as well taking his tea by himself; and that reminds me that you promised not to call him Harry."

"Did I? It slips out somehow; but come, Joany, ask him to tea, and he shall be Mr. Goldie, and nothing but Mr. Goldie, all the evening. Well, what now?"

She was quick to read the objections I did not utter, and her impatient little movement of head and hand drew out more than I had intended to say.

"You see, dear, many an acquaintance that would be suitable enough for me, plain Joan Smith, would not do for you, Lelgarde Atheling: I often feel that."

"Then I wish you would cease to feel it, Joan. What have the hateful Athelings ever done for me? Have they not cast me off altogether, and my father before me? And what for? Because he chose to marry the woman he loved, and such a woman as our mother!"

"They did not know *what* she was," I said, soothingly. "They only knew *who* she was—a Mrs. Smith, the widow of an army doctor."

"Absurd pride!" said Lelgarde. "I call it a sin—a sin I should scorn to be guilty of." And up went her little haughty head, and she looked as proud as any Atheling among them, and twice as beautiful, though they were a beautiful race. All the same, I thought she need not have fired up so fiercely at the idea of any disparity between her and our artist fellow-lodger.

At this moment a hurried knock at the door was followed, before I could say, "Come in," by the apparition of a wild curly head, a young face clad in an untidy beard, and a paint-bedaubed blouse hanging loose on a broad pair of shoulders; in fact, Harry Goldie himself, all dirty and unkempt, and what Lelgarde called picturesque, from his afternoon's painting.

"I beg pardon again and again," he said, humbly; "but my picture is quite finished now, and I thought perhaps—just this once—you would not mind coming down to look at it, would you?"

He spoke to me and looked at Lelgarde; and there was small use in my demurring, for she was on her feet directly, and "Oh, of course we will come!" was her ready answer. So down we went in the cold to the studio belonging to the great artist, Mr. Lascelles, to whom Harry had been colour-mixer, pupil, assistant, almost son, for some time before we had come to lodge in the house, now six years ago. To make no acquaintances had been my fixed rule from the moment when my mother's death left me in charge of my young sister; yet, before we had been a month in the house, we were not only friendly, but intimate with Harry Goldie. His frank face and pleasant greeting were a positive refreshment; and, by dint of being always in the way when he was wanted, and out of it when he was not wanted, always on the look out to do us any neighbourly kindness, and cheerily grateful to receive any in return, Harry Goldie had become quite our friend. My anxiety was to prevent his becoming anything else.

The studio was brilliantly lighted, and the picture stood on its easel in the middle: a wonderful picture it was! Its history was this:—Some worthy people, whose money burnt in their pockets I should think, had offered two hundred guineas to the painter of the best picture on a given subject; the competitors being all young and poor artists, and the money to be spent on a tour in Italy. The subject was from Tennyson's song, "Too late—too late," as well I knew, seeing that Harry below stairs and Lelgarde above had been wailing its dreary burden everlastingly, till I was fit to hang myself. The canvas was dark, representing a moonless, starless night; all the light fell from the lamps of the retreating virgins upon the central figure—the desolate purposeless figure, quite an embodiment of the words "too late." "Where have I seen that before?" was my first thought; and then I saw at a glance that it was the image of Lelgarde. I looked reproachfully at Harry, but he met my eyes so innocently, that to this day I believe he was unconscious of the likeness. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;" and a painter's brush is his mouth-piece, I suppose. He closed the door, and looked, not at the picture, but into Lelgarde's eyes.

"Well?" he said, eagerly.

She gave a little gasp of surprise.

"Oh! Harry, it is not a picture, it is an inspiration. One can only think how one hopes she got to heaven after all."

"Please think, besides, that you hope I may get to Italy," he cried.

"Oh! you must get the prize; you can't fail. Nobody could do better than this."

"Ah! I am not so sure about that; but at all events, you wish me good luck, do you not, Miss Atheling, and Miss Smith?"

Miss Smith came in rather lamely, it must be confessed; but I forgave him, and heartily wished him good luck. I did so want him to go quite away.

"When will you know about it?" I asked.

"On Tuesday."

"Tuesday?" cried Lelgarde. "That is my birthday. My birthday is sure to bring you good luck: don't you think so?"

She held out her hand to him, frankly. It was high time to be gone, and so I remarked, looking reproof at my foolish child, who answered with a little toss, which said, "I will if I choose," and so we bade good-night to Harry Goldie, and climbed up the long flight of stairs to our third story.

Tuesday came, and it is unnecessary to say that Harry Goldie came with it; of course, Lelgarde had her own way. When I returned from my day's work, I found her in her one white dress, poor child, flitting about the tea-table, putting little finishing touches to its adornment, colouring and turning white again, fifty times in a minute, in that excitable way of hers. Presently, a peal at the door-bell made her start.

"There he is! how glad I am! I know he has the prize."

"How can you possibly tell?"

"How could any one possibly doubt, Joan? It was not a disappointed man, I am sure, that gave that pull at the bell. But I will make assurance sure."

"My dear! not out on the public stairs." But she was off, and far below I heard the eager question and the cheery answer, and then up they came, Harry sending his voice before him:

"All right, Miss Smith; wish me joy, I am off on Monday."

I did wish him joy heartily, and it was not all because he was going, either; nay, as I sat behind the teapot, and saw him making frightful inroads on the bread-and-butter, I began to reflect how dull the house and the world in general would be, when his bright face was gone. Besides, I pitied the lad; it was sad to think that there were no parents, no brothers and sisters, to share in his gladness: only we, who, after all, were nothing to him. Beyond the fact that he was an orphan, and owed everything to Mr. Lascelles' kindness, Harry had never let out a word about his antecedents or belongings, a reserve which often struck me as remarkable in one, in other respects, so boyishly frank. Perhaps Lelgarde's feelings were keeping pace with mine, for she grew pale and silent, played with her food, and presently left the table, and went, with a little shiver, to the fire.

"I feel as if something were going to happen to-night," she said, and the postman's knock at that moment made her jump. We all laughed.

"I wonder you have not left off being excited about the postman," I said; "you know he never brings anything for us." I had scarcely done speaking, when the servant entered with a letter: still more marvellous, a letter for Lelgarde.

"Now, who can this be from?" she said, turning it over, as people do, before resorting to the simple expedient of opening it. "What a stiff hand. It looks like a bill."

"No, thank goodness, it can't be that," I said, hastily. "Lelgarde, my dear, what is the matter?"

For Lelgarde, glancing over it, had turned deadly white, and sunk down on a chair. Harry Goldie sprang towards her, as if eager to defend her from something or somebody. I snatched the letter which fell from her hand, saying: "I think it must be a mistake." I took it, I read it; no, thank God, it was no mistake. I knew in a moment that what I had sometimes dwelt upon as a too improbable vision, had become a reality; that my Lelgarde's poverty was over; her proper place was secured to her. The letter was from Mr. Graves, the family lawyer of the Athelings, and in it he informed Lelgarde that Miss Atheling having died intestate, and having survived her sister and coheiress, Miss Hilda Atheling, the estate and house of Athelstanes, together with a rent-roll of some thousands a year, became hers, as heir-at-law. I have a vague recollection of what followed. I remember hugging my Lelgarde, and seeing her cry and laugh in turns, and I remember, as in a dream, the face of Harry Goldie, looking as if he thought the truest kindness would be to procure me a strait-waistcoat and medical assistance instantly. But when I had explained it all to him, his honest face grew blanker still; he tried to mumble out some congratulations, and broke down.

"I had no idea this was likely to happen," he said, ruefully.

"Who could have any idea of it?" cried Lelgarde, "who could suppose that, after all her denunciations, my old cousin Ethel-

dreda would have forgotten to make her will. Or was it, I wonder, that when it came to the point, she could not bear to separate Athelstanes from Atheling."

"Is it a very grand place?" asked poor Harry, dolefully.

"I never was there," Lelgarde answered. And there was a silence, broken at last by Harry, who rose and wished us good-night.

"Perhaps it had better be good-bye, too," he said, and for the first time in his life, I should think, he looked and spoke awkwardly; "you will probably be very busy."

"Not too busy to see you," replied Lelgarde, holding out her hand; and so he took it—very gingerly, I noticed, not with an objectionable pressure this time, and she went on: "Our good fortune has found us both out on the same day. Will you come and see me at Athelstanes when you come back a great artist?"

"Yes," he cried, eagerly, with colour rising, "yes, that is a bargain. When I come back a great artist, I will come and see you."

He looked at her—she at him. It was high time for me to interfere.

"Good-night, Mr. Goldie," I said, with emphasis. He relapsed into awkwardness, bowed, and was gone.

Lelgarde was in flighty spirits, chattering and laughing over her new prospects, turning them and herself into ridicule, her cheeks so hot all the time, and her hands so chilly, that I never rested till I had coaxed her to come to bed. It was far on in the night when I woke with a start, to see her, by the light from the street lamps below, kneeling by the bed with her face hidden. It brought a painful recollection of a certain morbid phase of her childhood; but she was quite herself now, as I soon perceived—quite herself, but crying bitterly. I called her softly by name, and she rose and flung herself down by me, and hid her face on my shoulder. I did not ask what was the matter: I knew better. I only drew my child into my arms, and soothed and kissed her, till her sobs abated, and she lay exhausted; then she whispered: "Do not mind, Joany, I ought to be very thankful—I am: but the old life has been very pleasant, and I do not like to say good-bye to it for ever."

CHAPTER II.

ALL that night I lay awake and thought hard. When Lelgarde had answered to Harry Goldie's question about Athelstanes, "I was never there," my conscience had smitten me for letting the child unconsciously utter a falsehood. Lelgarde had been at Athelstanes, though all recollection of that visit, and, indeed, of almost every other occurrence of the first eight years of her life, had been swept away in a long, lingering, nervous fever, which had seemed at the time to threaten either life or reason. Thankful had my mother and I been to have our darling restored to us with no worse consequences than this loss of memory, and a train of nervous terrors, sleep-walking, frightful dreams, all the midnight miseries so well known to children and invalids. These last ill effects passed away in time, but the period preceding her illness remained a blank to Lelgarde, a blank which we were advised not to endeavour to disturb. But now it seemed to me that awkward complications might arise from her ignorance of that stay at Athelstanes, and, for the first time, I proposed to tell her of her illness, and of what had gone before. We were to pay a visit to Mr. Graves at twelve o'clock, and I resolved to speak before that; so, as we sat at breakfast, I began.

"My dear, I am going to tell you what will surprise you very much; you have been at Athelstanes before."

She looked at me in amazement.

"Oh! never, I assure you, Joan; how could I?"

"Just after your father died, when you were between seven and eight years old. You know all his history."

"Yes, how he was in the army, and those two dreadful Miss Athelings and their father were his only relations, and would take no notice of him after he married our dear mother."

"True; but after his death, mother got a letter from the eldest Miss Atheling—the old squire had been dead some years then—offering to adopt you, and make you their heiress, on one condition, that our mother would promise to give you up entirely, and never see you again."

Lelgarde coloured scarlet.

"Do not tell me that mamma agreed to that," she said, in a choked voice.

"It was for your sake if she did, Lelgarde; and so you need not look so fierce about it: she thought, and, indeed, I thought too, that she had no right to take such a chance away from you."

"Did I go there then? I have quite forgotten it."

"Yes, poor little thing, you went. Miss Atheling sent her housekeeper to fetch you, and we made up our minds that we

had given you up entirely; but, my dear, have you really no recollection whatever?"

"None," she answered, "none—I think," frowning as if the effort to remember gave her pain.

"When some weeks passed, and we heard nothing of you, I could not rest without seeing if you were well and happy. I was under no pledge, whatever my mother might be; so off I set for Athelstanes—a weary journey, all the way into Yorkshire—the last part by coach. It was Providence that sent me there certainly. I arrived in the evening, and the coach set me down at the corner of a lane, from which I had to walk to the village inn."

"Joan, how brave you were! You could not have been more than seventeen."

"Who would hurt me, do you suppose? If I was not old enough, I was at least ugly enough to take care of myself. As I trudged along in the dusk—it was winter—I saw a little figure coming towards me all alone, a little mite carrying a bundle."

"Was it I? What could I be doing?"

"When you saw me, you were in my arms in a moment, clutching my neck, sobbing, shaking all over. 'I am running away,' you said. 'I am running to you and mamma. I cannot stay here—they frighten me to death!' And, Lelgarde, whenever I hear the word terror, I think of your face then."

"Don't talk about that," she interrupted, hurriedly, turning very pale, "I know the feel of it—I don't care to hear about it. Go on. What did you do?"

"Do? I just gathered you up in my arms, and carried you back to the end of the lane. I had heard that the up-coach would pass there in an hour's time, and by noon next day we were with mamma again in the old lodgings that we lived in till she died."

"That is my brave old Joan! And then——?"

"Then came your fever, my poor little woman; you were in a fearful state by the time we reached London. Indeed, you must have been in the first stage of it when I met you, otherwise I doubt if any ill-usage could have driven such a timid thing as you were into the desperate act of running away."

"What did Miss Atheling say? What had she done to me?"

"Miss Atheling simply gave us to understand that nothing more could be expected from her; and, since then, we have lived by our work, and a happy life on the whole has it not been, my pet?"

Lelgarde was musing deeply.

"Why was I never told this before?" she asked at length.

"My darling, because we were advised to let your memory go to sleep as it was inclined to do. Nobody thought then that you would ever have to go to Athelstanes again."

I did not care to tell her that for months after her illness any momentary awakening of recollection would bring on a fit of nervous terror. The doctor said that there had evidently been some cruel shock to the nerves, and beyond that we could discover nothing.

"Then," said my sister, shivering, "it was what caused my illness, and not the illness itself, that has left me such a silly, easily-cowed creature, afraid of the dark, afraid of my own shadow. I have to thank my cousin Etheldreda for a great deal of very severe suffering."

"I hope God has—forgiven her," I said, but I am not sure that I meant that exactly.

"And my Cousin Hilda," Lelgarde went on, "why, as they were co-heiresses, did she never appear in the matter at all?"

"My impression is that Miss Hilda was a great invalid at that time, though it was not until several years afterwards that we heard by chance of her death. She must have died comparatively young, for I know she was many years younger than her sister, and Miss Atheling can hardly have been much over fifty."

"What a colourless, grim, grey life theirs has been!" said Lelgarde. "Joan, you ought to have told me this before, or for ever held your peace. You have given me a horror of the thought of my new home."

So I had done what I hated, only to be told that I had better have left it alone: and there was my darling, white and shaky as she used to be in those miserable childish days.

"Well," I said, as cheerily as I could, "the colourless, grim, grey life is at an end now; you are going to introduce a new régime; and, as a beginning, make haste and get ready to go and talk wisely to your man of business. How grand that sounds!"

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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XXVII. THE FAGGOTS BURN.

For some days everything went on pleasantly at Monasterlea. May had doubts and fears about the bargain that had been concluded between uncle and nephew; but seeing that doubts and fears were not relished by Paul, she put them all away from her, and saw everything in the light by which he wished her to look at it. Paul paid frequent visits to Tobereevil, and took long walks and rides over the property, making himself acquainted with the scene of his future duties; which were first to be those of servant, and afterwards those of master. The affairs of Miss Martha's farm were rather neglected for the first week or so, but the old lady was right glad to give holiday to her new manager for any good reason he could show, and resumed her farming habits till such time as his various duties could be made to run side by side. There was no wearying, meanwhile, between the two lovers, of the joyous intercourse which they now tasted; of the blithe chatter which they carried on while roaming over hill and dale. There was no end to the leases which they granted in imagination, the comfortable cottages they built as they went along, the half-yearly debts of rent which they remitted to the long overtaxed families in which the father had broken a leg, or the mother was in a consumption. Such a thing as an eviction was to be heard of never more. And if May, in the midst of Paul's enjoyment of his make-believe power, felt a question rising like a trouble within her, "What will Simon, the miser, say to all these changes?" the words were never spoken, and the question was crushed down again in her heart, where it lay; a little pain that would at times throb into a great one.

In the mean time the snow fell often and the nights were frosty, and the evenings had become very delightful in the little brown parlour. Ghosts had come into season, and Nannie's stories were in fashion in the kitchen, especially of an evening, when Bridget's gossips and sweethearts had come in to lend a hand with the churning. It was just at the close of one of the short dark days before Christmas, in the midst of a high storm, that a new and rough current came troubling the happy tide of human life at Monasterlea.

May had not gone out with Paul that morning, because it was to be a busy day with her, and a busy day it had been. There had been butter-making in the morning and baking in the afternoon, and the superintendence of these matters belonged to May. It was all over now, and she was expecting Paul; for Paul, as a rule, spent his evenings at Monasterlea. She was dressed in a long woollen robe of a soft plum colour, with dazzling white ruffles at her throat and wrists. She was standing by the fire, with a piece of needlework in her hand, but it was too dark to work. The shifting light of flames is a pleasant light to think by, and May was in a reverie, looking at pictures in her mind, whose colours were as fair as those of a rainbow. She looked a picture herself, as the fire illumined her dark braids of hair, and all the tints, and curves, and dimples of her face. Even in repose and by such light the face looked full enough of humour, and sweetness, and thought, and maybe passion, to make a painter's fame. She

looked a woman who could make the happiness of every creature who might come near her; but who could possibly break her heart. And even at this moment there was trouble for her in the air. The trees of Tobereevil were shrieking two miles away in the wind: and ill-luck came and knocked at the hall-door at Monasterlea.

May went quickly to the door, thinking it was Paul, and saw ill-luck standing waiting for admittance. It had a tall, buxom shape, with a riding-habit fluttering about the graceful limbs. There was some light hair streaming from a gleaming face whose beauty shone even through the shadows which almost hid it. There was a hat somewhat maltreated by the wind and sleet, with shrunken feathers streaming after the hair. Ill-luck had come in the shape of Katherine Archbold.

If you had spoken to May an hour ago about Katherine, it would have appeared, by her answer, that she had not seen, nor heard, nor thought of that young lady for a period that seemed as long as seven years. She would have remembered that she was a person who had ruined poor Christopher; but as Christopher had written several cheerful letters of late, and seemed to be doing well, May and Paul had lately made up their minds, in their passion for poverty, that Christopher would, in the long run, be much better without his money. She would also have remembered that Katherine was a person who had laid some claim to Paul's affections, and she pitied her in this, seeing that Paul had no liking for her. It is no untruth to assert that, for the past few weeks, she had utterly forgotten her existence, so completely had May been shut up in her own rosy world. And yet here was the splendid Katherine, standing dishevelled, like a storm-sprite, at the door of her little home.

"Let me in, and don't look so amazed to see me," cried Katherine, in the light, amused tone which she had always used with May. "For goodness sake shut the door, and give me a welcome. I think I deserve one after riding so far to see you."

"I beg your pardon," said May, "do come in to the fire. Oh, dear, how wet you are, and how splashed with snow and mud! You must change your clothes immediately. And who has come with you? There is somebody still outside in the cold."

"There is nobody," said Katherine; "I came alone."

"Alone!" echoed May. "And do your father and mother know it?"

"Perhaps, by this time," said Katherine, carelessly. "But you know I never ask leave for what I do. I left a written message which they will find, no doubt. But first they shall have a fright."

"How could you be so cruel?" burst forth May.

"There, little goody! Hold your tongue and don't scold," said Katherine, tossing off her hat. "I choose to punish every one who tyrannises over me. They are very safe, since they find I have not drowned myself, nor eloped with some bog-trotter, as they will have been wise enough to suppose. In the mean time, are you going to be my enemy or my friend?"

"Your friend," said May. "And I have no right to scold you, nor to pry into your affairs. Of course I think you wrong, but I also think you wet and tired. And your horse? Did any one take your horse?"

Katherine laughed. "I let him go at the gate," said she, "and he will trot back to Camlough."

"And terrify your parents?"

"Probably," replied Katherine. "For Heaven's sake don't stare so, but get me some dry clothes, as you said you would. They will send me some things presently, but I have brought nothing with me."

May said no more, but led her unexpected visitor away to her own chamber. It was the very same room in which she had dressed her once before, when they were children. It was the most whimsical room in the house, all nooks and angles, and from its sloping ceiling and the many twists in its walls, was peculiarly well suited to show off the gambols of the goblins which firelight will set capering. It had been made out of a bit of an old sacristry, and there was a rather grim and sorrowful ghost of a sculptured crucifix in bas-relief on the wall, all chipped and almost worn away by time; besides some cherubs' heads with curly locks and round cheeks, broken noses and pouting lips, clustered under the slantings in the corners of the ceiling. In the midst of these relics flourished all the little niceties which a girl loves to gather round her in her own particular sanctum. The guest having been arrayed in the prettiest gown she possessed, and placed in a comfortable chair at the hearth, May went down on her knees to make the fire burn more brightly. Bridget brought fresh fuel, and took a message to Miss Martha.

"Allow me," said Katherine, and she took the little bundles of sticks from Bridget's hand, and fed the flames with them, from time to time, as she talked. May sat on the hearth-rug and listened to her talking.

"You wonder, I suppose, what brought me away from home in such a hurry, and what made me come here to give my company to you? You are dying with curiosity, and yet you are too polite to ask."

Here Katherine cast a stick upon the blazing fire.

"You see my father and mother have pleased themselves to be angry with me. They are quite out of humour because I wish to amuse myself. It is beyond all reason their wanting to dictate to me. They sulked at me for a week about that Christopher. By the way, he came here and made a fuss, did he not?"

"He came here and nearly died," said May.

Katherine shrugged her shoulders and looked complacent, and another stick was tossed into the flames.

"Well, I can't help it. If people will be so silly, I am not to be held accountable. It was a pity to lose the money, but I did not think of that. People begin to think of money when they grow a little older. When one has had all that one could fancy it is not easy to learn prudence; and Sir John and Lady Archbold need not try to teach me now. I could not bring them to their senses without giving them a fright. They shall be frightened for twelve hours; till my maid shall find a letter, as if by the merest chance. And then they will send my trunks. They shall be very anxious to see me before they get me back again."

May was silent. With all her wish to be hospitable she could not find in her heart that she was glad of the chance that had brought Miss Archbold to Monasterlea. Katherine, meantime, fed the flames with a lavish hand, and the fire leaped and burned with a good roar in the chimney; and May looked up and suddenly saw that the sticks which the visitor held in her lap were those very wicked faggots which she herself had hidden out of sight and forgotten. It was not at all wonderful that Bridget should have found them and turned them to account; but May did not like to see them in Katherine's hands. A strange fit of superstitious bewilderment came upon her; she saw impish spirits dancing through the flames, and clambering up the smoke-ladders and mocking at her as if they had overreached her. Turning her eyes from the fire she saw Katherine's defiant face shining through the glamour made by the up-springing of the flames, and the down-pressing of the shadows around her glittering golden head. At the same moment she heard the muffled sound of Paul's voice and steps in the outer hall. The sound seemed dim and far away, and did not break cheerfully upon the strange mood that had befallen her. Instead of that it mixed itself up with a sense of approaching danger which she was powerless to avert. The danger had come with Katherine, and was wrapped up in her; belonged to Katherine, and would work through her. She was the instrument of all the evil that was in truth haunting Paul. She had come as ill-luck to Monasterlea.

Sympathy with Paul's troubles was making May superstitious. She was attacked by this terror as by a fit of sudden sickness; and making an effort to shake it off sprang up kneeling on the hearth.

"Hark!" said Katherine, dropping the faggots and holding up her jewelled finger. "There is the lover. Is he not the lover? How angry you were that day when I showed you to yourself! How you denied my penetration! Well, was I not right? Has not all that I predicted come to pass?"

"No," said May; "you were altogether wrong."

"Hey-day! What is that? Are you not engaged to the handsome Paul?"

"Yes; but I would rather not talk about it."

"Get away with you!" said Katherine. "You are as prim as an old maid. When are you to be married?"

"Oh, I do not know. There is much to be done first."

"Is there, indeed. And you are both good and patient?"

"We are both very happy," said May, simply.

"How nice to be looking on at such a pretty pair of lovers!" said Katherine. "So patient and so happy, in spite of a long, long engagement with a vague, vague ending! That is what I shall be doing while I am here. It will interest me extremely. You must introduce me to your Paul. I shall be civil to him for your sake, and he will like me I dare say. Perhaps he will remember having seen me before."

"He remembers you," said May, mechanically, with her eyes on a half-burnt faggot between the bars.

"Oh! He told you so when you repeated to him all that folly which I talked about him at Camlough."

An involuntary look of disgust crept for a moment into May's eyes. It did not escape Katherine, nor was she likely to forget it when it presently disappeared.

"You are mistaken in me," said May; "I could not so betray any one."

"Ah! that is good of you. Primness, I see, sometimes does one a service. I remember now that I made you promise to forget that conversation."

"I have a better memory than you."

"You have a better everything, my dear, except physique and self-will. I yield to no one in beauty, and I have a talent for having my own way, which amounts to genius. You shall see it in full working before I have been here long."

May looked up brightly, and laughed at her audacity, which, she yet knew very well, was not a merry jest. After all, this was no unearthly creature of unhallowed powers not to be baffled; but only wild Katherine Archbold. It was her nature to do mischief where she could, but May had a subtle power of her own, of which she was not all unconscious. And she would not fear any other woman on earth, were that other woman incarnate beauty itself. Something of this Katherine found in the speaking dark eyes. So she became more offensive.

"Are you desperately in love with your fine Paul?" she asked.

"I don't dislike him," said May.

"Bah!" said Katherine, provoked. "As if I did not know that you are a soft little fool, ready to love anybody!"

May coloured. "Not anybody," she said; "not you, for instance."

"Oh, she has lost her temper at last. Not me? Well, look here. I will make a bargain with you. You begin to love me with all your might, and I will give you this pretty ring. It is worth a hundred guineas."

The diamonds flashed in the light of the blazing faggots, as Katherine held the ring poised on the end of her little finger.

May put her hands behind her back. "Keep it," she said; "I am too poor to give you even the wretched price you ask for it."

Katherine frowned and smiled. "I always knew you were obstinate," she said, "but you are sharper than I thought you."

There was sudden silence between the two girls. It was as if both had understood that there had been more under their words than either had cared to utter. Again the firelight played its weird pranks about the guest's golden head, and threw strange meanings into her eyes, and laid ominous touches upon her mouth. And again the superstitious, unaccountable terror of approaching harm gathered round May's heart; till a welcome household sound in the passage broke the spell, and she felt ashamed of herself.

"Come!" she said, "we are a silly pair to stay here sparring at one another. Don't you think we had better go and be sociable in the parlour? My aunt is waiting for us, and I want to present you to Mr. Finiston."

"Wait!" said Katherine. She had lighted the only remaining stick of the wicked faggots. She held the blazing wood in her hand, and watched it burn away slowly towards her fingers, while a lurking smile played about the corners of her mouth. "I am reading your future. I am looking to see whether you will be married to your Paul. Did you ever hear of Margaret and her daisy? Well, if the burnt part breaks and drops away before the flame reaches my finger it is the breaking of your engagement. Watch, watch! It is gone!"

The piece of red charcoal had dropped on the hearth. Katherine tossed the burning morsel that remained into the fire. The flames dropped in the grate, and the room was in darkness.

"Don't be a goose!" said May, and opened the door into the lighted passage.

But Katherine was not accustomed to be called a goose.

PERIODICAL COMETS.

THE discoveries of modern science lead us to infer that there is a great resemblance, in many particulars, between the greatest and the smallest bodies in creation; that atoms, like suns, are separated from each other by distances which are enormous when compared with their actual size; that the molecules composing a bar of iron waltz round and round in circlets or ovals, exactly as Mars, Jupiter, and the rest of us, whirl round Phœbus, and Phœbus himself and his fellow-stars revolve round some unknown central point. Perhaps some atoms, in bodies called solid, may dance up and down, like gnats in sunshine, the swarm remaining stationary while each gnat keeps changing its place

in the airy reel; others may simply vibrate backwards and forwards, like bullets fixed at the tip of a steel spring, and made to oscillate by being pulled aside from their position of repose.

Atoms, too, like suns and planets, are each endowed with their own proper force. Their inconceivable minuteness by no means renders them insignificant. They are veritable giants in disguise. The attractive power of Sirius may be enormous, overwhelming the mind with such questions as, How much would a pound of lead, weighed on earth, weigh on the dog-star's surface, if, indeed, it has a surface? But the energy of many atoms is all but irresistible. Freezing water will burst iron bottles into fragments. Terrible explosions are often the result of the attraction exerted on each other by atoms which are determined to join company at the first opportunity. Nothing can prevent their ultimate union.

We cannot suppose the atoms of which bodies are composed to be in actual contact, for in that case their expansion and contraction by heat and cold, and other causes, would be impossible. And yet we are unable to force them closer together than they choose to go. Water, so yielding to the touch, is very slightly compressible. Pressure has been tried in vain to permanently augment the density of soft metals. Steam, ice, gunpowder, fulminating mercury, afford familiar instances of the power of atoms. In short, the smallest molecules, like the largest stars, are separated by intervening spaces, perform their allotted motions, and are gifted with strength enough to insure them respect.

As the least and the largest bodies resemble each other, so do the lightest and the heaviest in their obedience to universal laws. Nothing, to be visible, can be conceived lighter than a comet. Had the ancients been aware of the excessive levity now attributed to them, they would have accounted for their extraordinary conduct by that cause. And yet the circumstance that stars shine through comets ought to have raised the suspicion that they could not be very dense. And yet, according to some, the moon was once a comet; Saturn also was once a comet. But the moon or Saturn, either of them, contains matter enough to make millions of comets.

Had the lightness of comets been known in former days, it might have dissipated all fears of their influence in causing either political disasters or physical catastrophes. Such things of nought can neither be capable of kindling wars, upraising deluges, nor splitting worlds into two or more pieces. These remarkable bodies sometimes throw out tails one hundred millions of miles in length and fifty thousand in diameter. What, however, is the mass of matter of which such a prodigious tail consists? According to Sir John Herschel, if it were all swept together and suitably compressed, it might be carted away in a single horse-load. Can bodies so infinitely light, we feel tempted to ask, be subject to the ordinary laws of gravity?

Tycho Brahé was the first, in modern times, to find that comets are not meteors engendered in the atmosphere, as held by Aristotle and numerous astronomers of later date. Kepler was of the same opinion, which he illustrated by a striking comparison, not devoid of plausibility. "Since the sea has its whales and leviathans, it is natural that the air should have its monsters and comets, shapeless bodies engendered from its superfluous dregs by a sort of animal faculty. As to their number, there are more comets in the sky than fish in the ocean." They were consequently supposed to be not far distant from the earth. But Tycho Brahé, not being able to ascertain the diurnal parallax of the comet of 1577, concluded that it must be further away from the earth than the moon.

Their movements were still more puzzling. Kepler supposed that they advanced in straight lines; that is, we suppose, in curves parallel to the surface of the earth. It was a nearer guess that comets describe a parabolic orbit—if that can be called an orbit which is not an orbit (there being no return), but only a path. This parabola run through by a comet, may be compared to a huge pair of sugar-tongs, with legs of infinite or rather indefinite length, which could never meet at their tips, even to grasp and catch the sweetest, solidest, most inviting of comets. Each comet came from a sort of nowhere, and, after showing itself to the wondering earth, returned to its nowhere again, lost in the depths of the heavens, the abyss of space, beyond the limits of the known celestial regions.

But unfortunately for such suppositions, there is no such place as nowhere, any more than there is such a fact or process as annihilation. There is change; which is life. A condition of material unchangeability and inaction would be absolute death; instead of which we everywhere meet with force and movement. The limbo of poets, if it have

a name, has no local habitation discoverable by telescopes. There is no "behind the scenes" in the heavens whence new stars and comets may make their entrance and strut and fret their hour on the celestial stage; no lumber garret or property room into which they can retire and be stowed out of the way. The universe is an open, infinite somewhere, at every point of its extent as much a real somewhere as it is here, where we happen for the moment to be bowling through space.

A little thought will, therefore, tell us that it is just as interesting to know what becomes of comets after we lose sight of them as to watch their doings while they are visible. Tycho Brahé's observations led him to infer that the comet of 1577 had described round the sun an arc of a circle including within it the orbits of Mercury and Venus. Herelius, in spite of his erroneous notions respecting the nature of comets, first discovered that the curves in which they moved were parabolic in their nature; but he appears to have known nothing—a grand and vital omission—of the place occupied by the sun within those curves, nor of the laws which governed the velocities of those bodies as they approached the summits of their parabolas.

It was an immense step when an astronomer dared predict that a given comet, which he had observed, would one day return—a still greater when he ventured to fix an epoch for its appearance when he would not himself survive to witness the fact. And our interest in the comets whose periodical return is well established increases with their increasing number. There appears no reason why this number should not augment with a rapidity comparable to the quickly successive discoveries of the telescopic planets circulating between Mars and Jupiter. At present we are acquainted with eight comets which have come back to visit us once or several times, after their return had been announced as probable in consequence of the circumstances of their previous arrivals. M. Delaunay, in the Annuaire du Bureau des Longitudes for 1872, gives sundry historical details, which we propose to abridge, relating to the discovery of the periodicity of those eight comets.

The most important of these in the annals of astronomy is Halley's comet. It is the first whose periodicity was ascertained, and its period of revolution is the longest known. Very remarkable also was the clue which led to its identification, as well as its reappearance, predicted by our illustrious countryman fifty-four years beforehand. So proud was the Oxford professor of his discovery, that he begs posterity (now our ancestors) to remember that it was due to an Englishman.

Edmund Halley calculated the elements of his comet's orbit at its perihelium passage in 1682, when it blazed in the heavens with wonderful splendour. He found that orbit to correspond exactly with those of the comets of 1531 and 1607, which led him to conclude that all the three were one and the same individual, making, in 1682, its third public appearance on the stellar stage. These three returns of the same comet gave it a period of revolution of about seventy-five years and a half, with a variation which might amount to two years. This incertitude did not prevent Halley from predicting its return in 1758.

Capini was the first to conceive the idea of searching the records of ancient observations for the orbits of comets, with a view to their possible return. If it had occurred to him to refer their motions to the sun's attraction, and to consider the sun as their centre, he would have made an enormous step in advance. He employed the most delicate processes then known to astronomy to ascertain when comets would reappear, but he had no means of verifying his predictions, because the resemblances which he thought he found in comets were only apparent. He ought to have compared their motions by referring them to the sun's influence. Halley was the first astronomer to adopt this grand principle, and he signally succeeded in consequence. His method led to the important conclusion that comets are veritable planets. Their movements, which appear extremely irregular, are not so when referred to the sun. The difference between them (considered as members of the solar system) lies in the form of the orbits they describe, and which, instead of being almost round, like those of the planets, are extremely long ovals, which is the reason why we lose sight of them during such lengthened intervals of time.

We have seen that there was a margin of about two years left open for the comet's return. It was an allowance made for the action of the planets on the comet's course. The exact amount of that action was difficult to determine. Nevertheless, Clairaut set to work to calculate it, in confirmation of his enthusiastic faith in the Newtonian system, which was not universally admitted

then by the world called "learned," as it now is. "The comet we are expecting," he said, in the public sitting of the Académie des Sciences, on the 14th of November, 1758, "has become the object of much greater interest than the public usually bestow on astronomical questions. The true lovers of science desire its return, because the result will be a brilliant confirmation of a system (Newton's) in whose favour every phenomenon gives evidence. Those, on the contrary, who delight to see philosophers plunged in trouble and uncertainty, hope that it will not come back, and that the discoveries of Newton and his partisans will fall to the level of other hypotheses, which are the offspring of mere imagination."

Undaunted by this scepticism and opposition, which we can hardly understand at the present day, he traced the constellations it would traverse, and the planets it would meet with on its way, and found that Saturn would retard its arrival by one hundred days, and Jupiter by five hundred and eighteen—in all by six hundred and eighteen; that is, this revolution of the comet would be a year and eight months longer than the previous one. In other words, its passage at its perihelium would take place about the middle of April, 1759, within a month, more or less.

Never had a scientific prophecy excited greater curiosity from one end of Europe to the other. The comet did reappear; it followed the path through the constellations which Clairaut had traced for it; it reached its perihelium on the 12th of March, 1759, just a month before the date indicated. We may note that the difference between theory and observation might be caused by the action of the planets Uranus and Neptune, of which (as he did not know of their existence) Clairaut could take no account in his calculations.

It was a grand triumph for the Newtonians. "We have all witnessed the accomplishment of the event," wrote Lalande, who had rendered great assistance in the calculations; "so that it is placed beyond a doubt that comets are really planets which turn like the others round the sun. M. Clairaut demanded a month's grace in favour of theory, and the month's grace has not been exceeded. The comet came, after a period of five hundred and eighty-six days longer than its preceding period, that is, thirty-two days before the appointed date. But what is thirty-two days for the various attractions of the solar system of which we have been unable to take account—for the comets of whose situation and strength we are ignorant—for the resistance of the ethereal matter, which we are incompetent to appreciate, and for the numerous quantities which we are obliged to neglect in an approximative calculation? The difference of five hundred and eighty-six days between two revolutions of the same comet—a difference produced by the disturbing forces of Jupiter and Saturn—is a more striking demonstration than one could have hoped to obtain of the grand principle of universal gravity. It places the law amongst the number of fundamental physical truths, of whose reality it is no more possible to doubt than it is of the bodies which produce attraction."

Halley's comet was again due in 1835. M. Damoiseau, taking into account the disturbance to be caused by Uranus, fixed its perihelic passage for the 4th of November of that year. Another astronomer, M. de Pontecoulant, predicted for the 13th (according to M. Delaunay); but M. Lecouturier states that M. de Pontecoulant's calculation gave the 15th of November, at midnight, as the date. The comet really passed the point of its orbit nearest to the sun at nine o'clock in the morning of the 16th of November, thus failing to keep the rendezvous given it by so brief a delay as nine short hours. As the anxious expectant was aware of its coming, he probably waited patiently, for astronomy can boast of but few more brilliant feats than this.

According to the same gentleman's calculations, twenty-seven thousand two hundred and seventeen days must elapse between the comet's departure from its perhelion in 1835 and its next arrival at that point of its orbit; this calculation appoints the 24th of May, 1910, for that interesting phenomenon to come off. The arithmetic which hangs about Halley's comet in groups of figures, inconceivable by unlearned minds, informs us that for thirty-eight years it travels in our direction from the extreme limits of our solar system to a point distant about forty-eight millions of miles from the sun; that it then retreats rapidly, and thirty-eight years afterwards, leaving Uranus behind it, reaches Neptune's orbit, about three thousand millions of miles from the sun. These figures are far too enormous to convey any definite idea of distance; but it would be easy to calculate how many years it would take a

racehorse to gallop round this course from the starting point, its perihelion, back again to the winning-post, the perihelion also.

So much for the comet's excursions into space. It was natural to trace it back retrospectively into the night of ages. The result has been to establish, with more or less certainty, that our coy visitant has been detected, at sundry intervals agreeing with the periods required, up to October of the year 12, B.C.

Encke's comet, named after the calculator of its elements, completes its revolution in about three years and a half. Discovered in 1818 by M. Pons, at Marseilles, it was suspected to be identical with a comet observed in 1805, which suspicion was confirmed by Encke. Regarding merely the rapidity of its successive returns, this object might be considered a planet; but it has been left on the list of comets, both on account of the appearances it presents, and because it is not visible to us throughout the whole course of its orbit.

The most noteworthy point about Encke's comet results from a comparison of the dates of its successive returns to the same point of its orbit. Making every possible allowance for the disturbing forces exercised on it by the planet's attraction, Encke found that the period of its revolution is constantly diminishing, which would indicate the presence of a resisting medium —that interstellar space is not a vacuum, but is filled with an ether possessing some density, however slight. Such a medium, by gradually checking the comet's velocity, would cause it to yield to the sun's attraction; its orbit, contracting more and more, would be run through in shorter and shorter periods of time. Encke's comet was last seen in November, 1871.

Biela's comet (with a period of six years and three quarters) is another instance of fantastic resemblance between the largest and the smallest works of the Creator. There are microscopic plants and animals (examples, closterium and trichoda) which, after attaining a certain age, contract in the middle, become fiddle-shaped, hour-glass-shaped, and finally separate into two independent, thrifty individuals. Microscopists call this process "fissiparous multiplication." But who would suppose that a comet would ever adopt that mode of increase? Nevertheless, Biela's has, beyond the possibility of doubt, done so. Discovered in 1826, seen again in 1832, it could not be observed in 1839 in consequence of the unfavourable position of its orbit at the time of its perihelic passage. But in 1846, astronomers, without any reproach to their sobriety, saw it double. It was two comets, travelling side by side, with a tendency rather to quit than to approach each other. The quarrel, too, had come on suddenly; shortly before its complete accomplishment, such observers as Maury, of Washington, and Challis, of Cambridge (England), declare that they saw no symptoms of the separation. The disunited couple are expected back in the autumn of 1872, and we shall be curious to see whether they have made it up, and behave as becomes their high position.

After this specimen of eccentricity, the other return comets are valuable rather as increasing the list of periodicals than for any special interest they offer to the general reader. There is Faye's comet, with a period of seven years and a half, discovered at the Paris Observatory in 1843. M. le Verrier, calculating the perturbations it would experience on its way, fixed its perihelic passage for the 3rd of April, 1851, a little after midnight. The prediction, wonderfully exact, was fulfilled on the 2nd of April, about ten in the morning. The same comet was seen again in 1858 and 1865. It ought to show itself once more in 1873.

Brorsen's, with a period of five years and a half, discovered at Kiel in 1846, is a more slippery comet than the preceding. It was searched for in vain in 1851, but found again in 1857. Similarly, in 1862, it was not forthcoming, but was detected again in 1868. Doubtless Astronomer Brorsen is himself more punctual than the untrustworthy vagabond who bears his name.

D'Arrest's comet, discovered at Leipzig in 1851, has a period of six and a half years nearly. Its return was announced for the end of 1857; but as it would not be visible in the earth's northern hemisphere, the documents, and, if we may say so, its passport, prepared by M. Yvon Villarceau, were sent to observatories in the southern hemisphere in anticipation of its arrival. The result answered the French astronomer's predictions. The comet kept its appointment within twelve hours. In 1864 it gave no sign; but in 1870, on the 31st of August, it answered to its name.

On the 4th of January, 1858, Mr. Tuttle discovered a comet at Cambridge, United States. Tuttle's comet has a period of revolution of something more than thirteen years and a half. It was recognised at Marseilles by M. Borelly, in October, 1871. Finally,

Winnecke's comet was discovered by its godfather, also in 1858, at the Bonn Observatory. Its period is five years and a half, and is believed to be identical with the third comet of 1819. After 1858 it contrived to elude observation for awhile, but was caught by Winnecke himself on the 9th of April, 1869. On the 30th of June following, it slipped round the perihelic corner and got out of the way, leaving us to lay telescopes on it by-and-bye if we can.

Whatever harm comets may have done by frightening half-witted people out of their intellectual remnant, comet wines have in some slight measure made up for it. M. Babinet tells us that we may further improve their errors. The perturbations of Encke's comet have helped us to weigh the planet Mercury. By-and-bye we shall verify the weight already assigned to the earth by the irregularities of Biela's comet. Faye's will one day tell us the mass of Mars. And, lastly, the hope is held out to us that the comets which traverse the circumsolar regions will reveal to us, by their unsteady march, the existence and quantity of chaotic matter which circulates with the planets round our central star and supplies the meteoric masses known as aërolites.

THE MODERN TANTALUS.

I ACQUIRED this singular soubriquet among my friends from the following adventure.

Our friend Bricker Bracker is well known as being the possessor of a lodge situated in a deliciously sequestered locality, but, according to Sydney Smith's measure of inconvenient distance, much more than "five miles from a lemon." This was really a drawback to his abundantly proffered hospitality, as the nearest railway station, village inn, public-house, or human habitation, was at least eight miles away. But if there was this drawback in the case of the lodge, there was the advantage that it was so luxuriously victualled, so stored with the choicest wines, spirits, beers, &c., that a band of epicureans might ask for nothing better than to stand a month's siege there, and be regularly beleaguered.

Bricker-Bracker, indeed, prided himself on his cellars, where, in bins well lit and comfortably warmed, slept veteran bottles of Bordeaux and Burgundy, keeping each other comfortable, wrapped in what seemed their fur paletôts, made of thick cobwebs and mould. Another weakness of our friend Bracker was his taste in glass; his flasks, decanters, and glasses were all of the choicest kind. His theory was that a noble vintage should be nobly received, and that, as a lord used to be entitled to be hanged with a silken rope, so should a nobly-born vintage be carried to its doom in the most elegant vessels. He used to say, also, that the system of introducing black bottles which epicures affected was too plebeian; you missed the rich purple and all the glories of the grape; and thus it was that his sideboard and the shelves of his cabinet were lined with flasks and bottles, each exquisitely engraved all over with trees, and birds, and flowers—marvels of workmanship. But this did not exhaust the special tastes of Bricker Bracker. His gem of a house was fitted with all kinds of mechanical devices for saving trouble; the bells were electric, everything was done by machinery, and the quantity of labels all about the house, with the word "patent" inscribed, was inconceivable. He was, indeed, a species of modern Sir Abel Handy. Every guest had in his dressing-room a sort of simple telegraph, six little knobs, inscribed "clothes," "hot water," "fire out," "coffee," "boots," "spirits." Beside these, was a little door, which would fly open, discovering a tiny lift, which brought up the article wanted. All this was in the view of dispensing with servants, of whom our friend had a sort of horror. He said they broke his glass, and destroyed property generally, and he hoped soon, with improved machinery, to dispense with all but one or two. His apparatus for uncorking bottles was of singular ingenuity, and he had adapted a recent invention—a sort of screw-stopper, with a key, which has recently come into use—as a protection against the peculations of domestics, and as also useful in keeping the precious juice air-tight.

The world was naturally curious about this little ménage, and people were eager to be asked down. But Major Philips, however, a rather sneering officer, who had spent his life in "fadging about," and, with his wife, trying to get meat, drink, and quarters gratuitously, was almost snarling in his condemnation of the system.

"All this machinery is shabbiness and stinginess," he said. "The man wants to save. While you are staring at and admiring his devices, he is starving you. Depend upon it, though his bottles are fine,

the wine he puts in them is poor. It's all stinginess, I know. Cogs and wheels cost very little, for they eat nothing; men and women cost a great deal, for they do."

It was in vain to argue with this sceptic; that I assured him that Bricker Bracker was the most generous and lavish of men; nothing would convince him, and he went about describing the thing as a good joke, contemptuously holding up my friend to ridicule for this elaborate system of stinginess. Somehow, Philips always contrived to be right in his bitter publicly expressed opinions, or to have the appearance of being so, which amounts to the same thing; and on this occasion was to prove equally right, or have the appearance of right, to my confusion. The adventure was as follows:

Our Bricker Bracker sent out invitations for a choice little party of ten, who were to come down and stay the night of the feasting with him. Major Philips was with me at the time; and I turned on him triumphantly. "Now," I said, "I know Bracker sufficiently well to ask him to let me bring a friend to his house; and *he* knows me sufficiently well to agree to such a proposition. I will bring you if you like, and then you will see how ill-founded and even ungenerous is your judgment."

This was putting him in an ingenious state of embarrassment, as it would put him to proof, as it were, of his assertions, or make him accept a hospitality he had spoken of so contemptuously. But the selfish cynicism of Philips was unassailable.

"I shall go," he said, "because I owe it to myself, and it will give you a lesson. Mark my words, the whole thing will break down."

I said we should see.

On the very morning of the day on which the festival was to take place, a telegram was brought in. Again Philips was with me at the time. "What did I tell you?" he said. I opened it with dreadful misgivings. It was not a put off. But it went very near it. Bracker had been summoned away "to the bedside of a sick aunt."

"Has money, of course," said Philips. "No one would go to a sick aunt pure and simple, still less to a sick aunt's bedside."

But Bracker wrote, he had left everything ready for the dinner—the wines all ranged on the sideboard, ready for drinking. Key would be sent by post. "But take care of my glass. I must not find even a scratch on my precious decanters."

"There!" I cried, "is that the telegram of an inhospitable man?"

"I don't know," said Philips, "the whole looks to me more fishy than ever. Asked to dine, and the first thing is, the host flies! However, you shall see, my boy."

We drove down in great spirits, mustering seven at the least. Arrived at the lodge we were received by the single servant in charge—an excellent cook—and were shown to our rooms. There each brought all the mechanical resources into play, trying this button and that for "hot water," "boots," &c., and all working admirably. When we came down the servant brought me and Philips into the dining-room, and the most elegant appetising sight met our gaze. A choice little round table was laid out with exquisite taste, and on the shelf of the little sideboard were ranged, I suppose, at least a dozen decanters of the most elegant shapes, each engrossed over with birds, beasts, landscapes, &c., and each already in possession of the rich juice that was to recruit us.

"Well," I said to the sceptic, "what do you say now? Here is," reading the silver labels round the neck of each, "Amontillado, Chateauneuf de Pape, Clos Vougeot, '57 claret, port, and your own favourite, some noted old East India Madeira. What do you say now?"

"Wait a little," he said, coolly. "When it is in our glasses time enough for all that."

I could have retorted that even when good wine had reached Mr. Philips's interior, he had been known to reserve his gratitude, but I held my peace. On another corner shelf we found liqueurs and cognacs, prime old Scotch and Irish whiskies, and a silver punch-bowl, of old repoussé pattern, with lemon and sugar, in the correct quantity, lying at the bottom. A neatly written card exhibited minute directions for quantities; a lemon-squeezer, one of the most ingenious bits of machinery, lay beside it, and also a little engine for shaving off the peel. All these incitements whetted the appetites of our party, who were many-bottle men, excellent connoisseurs, and protested they never were in such vein.

Dinner was served, sent up by the lift; we waited on ourselves. We were sharp set, and some one suggested a glass all round of the particular old cognac. I got up myself to fetch the precious cordial. In fact, I was to act as my friend's deputy. "This," I said, holding it up to the light, "I *know* to be of immense value, and was

sold, I believe, at Prince Talleyrand's death. It is the softest and most delicious spirit you ever tasted. Prepare!"

"Help it round," said Philips, "and don't be like an auctioneer."

"Ah," I said, "gentlemen, would you believe it that there is one amongst us who is sceptical as to human hospitality, who requires proof, real proof? Well, it shall be furnished; but I warn that person, that when he shall have filled himself with the excellent vintages, of which he is unworthy, I shall call on him for an honourable avowal and retractation."

The cork did not come out, at least would not receive the corkscrew; when looking at it closer I perceived it to be one of the mechanical corks, which are screwed up tight with a key. "A wise precaution," I said; "this keeps out the air thoroughly." I rang the bell, or rather called down to the attendant through the tube, bidding her send up the key. The reply came promptly that master always kept it himself, and had said he would send it to me by post. Philips burst into a sneering laugh.

"Never mind the cognac," said a stout, jovial guest. "We'll do with the old West India. I never can eat a morsel unless I stimulate with a preparatory glass."

"Nor I," "Nor I," said other voices, with the unanimity of the chorus in William Tell.

"The West India will, in fact, be better," said I, "collaring" that bottle; "we—will—why," I faltered, "why this fellow is corked in the same way. Good gracious! Surely, they cannot *all* have been——"

I seized the flasks unwillingly one after the other. In the neck of every one, with one exception, had been inserted one of these terrible inventions, each screwed down only too satisfactorily. All the same—West India, Clos Vougeot, claret, "LL," not a bottle thus untreated! All the guests leaped frantically to their feet, for much was involved; their palates were inflamed with anticipation, and each was execrating the vile brass mechanism that shut off the precious fluids. We had the cook up in a moment.

"Where's the key?" was shouted at him desperately. "The key! The key!"

"It was sent to this gent by post. I saw it myself put up."

"I never got it!" I said, despairingly, "I give you my honour, never! But there is another—you can get another?"

"There were but one," said the cook, phlegmatically, "which he kep' by his watch-chain—one hopens all."

"Well, send for one."

"Can't be got nearer than London, ten miles there and ten miles back. And the shops would be all shut."

We looked at each other; never were there such despairing faces. Though the soup was served, every one stood up and every one had a bottle, frantically examining it, and as frantically making attempts with prongs of forks and the like. But the workmanship was too secure. What was to be done?

"Oh, this won't do, you know," said the oldest of the party. "I shall be ill if I don't have my drink. We must only knock the necks off."

This solution was hailed with delight, and blessings were showered on his head. But the cook at once interfered.

"Excuse me, gents," he said, promptly, though ungrammatically, "them things is all in my charge, and my master values 'em more than he does his money. He said there wasn't to be a scratch on 'em, and I'll take care there shan't be. No, if that's your line, gents, beg pardon, but they'd best be out of harm's way." With this he hurriedly gathered them up, and putting them safely back on the shelf, stood on guard before them.

The miserable night that followed was really indescribable. We were gloomy and furious. Who could eat, or even speak? The only diversion was the spectacle of men going restlessly over to make one more experiment on the wretched flasks. Were it the contriving something, in a critical case, where life was concerned, more ingenuity could not have been exhibited. Men became transformed into engineers and mechanicians. Strange complications with penknives were attempted; but the patentee had done his work too well. We turned with disgust from the dishes; some got up and walked about the room. Then we all quarrelled. The worst was the triumph of Philips, who said that he had suspected it all along. Nothing could clear me. It was pronounced, on the motion of Philips, to be the most ingeniously "stingy" trick ever perpetrated, and that Bricker Bracker, with his machineries and "tomfoolery," was the meanest of mankind. As for me, I was acquitted on the uncomplimentary grounds of "weakness of intellect."

"Only let it be a lesson to you for the future," said Philips. "Let him humbug *you* as much as he pleases, but see that he

does not use you as a mechanical engine to humbug other people."

The only thing for it was to order our two carriages and return sorrowfully to town—every one abusing *me*. It was then they were good enough to confer on me the name of Tantalus, or "Tanty" for short.

THE HERALD OF SUMMER.

I HEAR a gush of melody, I see a flush of green,
So I know the Summer's coming with the glory of a queen;
For Spring, her welcome herald, has proclaimed it far and wide,
Since the throne of Winter toppled, and the stern old despot died.

Spring has spread o'er moor and mountain a carpet for her feet,
Silver daisy, golden king-cup, purple orchis, cowslip sweet;
Bade the trees unfold a canopy of undulating shade,
Where anemone and violet their woodland home have made.

Pale narcissus and faint daffodil whisper of her by the well,
Where ferns bend o'er the primrose lest she the secret tell;
But hyacinth and harebell ring the tidings boldly out,
For the breeze to catch the echoes, and answer with a shout.

The busy brooklets, listening, have turned the theme to song,
And sing it to the sedges as they gently glide along;
The mountain streams, no longer dumb, join in the joyous lay,
And leaping o'er their rocky bounds laugh out in sparkling spray.

Glad butterflies are fluttering like banners in the air,
Rich flowers hold up their nectaries and offer incense rare,
The toiling bee hums cheerily, the gnats dance in the sun,
The very frogs croak gleefully o'er Springtide life begun.

No need the tardy cuckoo's note to gossip of the Spring,
Whilst other warblers' tuneful throats have a prophetic ring;
And orchards white with cherry-snow, through which blooms apple-blush,
Bring dreams of Summer fruitage to the birdlings in the bush.

Spring is here! and Summer's coming, with a coronal of light!
For the skylark, like a courtier, has winged his upward flight,
The first to meet Queen Summer in her golden car of state,
And salute her with his anthem close to her palace gate.

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

THE BRITISH LEGION IN SPAIN.

IN the year 1835, Don Carlos, brother of the recently deceased King Ferdinand, announced his claim to the Spanish throne, and headed an armed insurrection against the Queen Regent and the child-queen, Isabella, in the Basque provinces.

The claims of Don Carlos rested on the fact, that by the national Salic law no woman could wear the Spanish crown. This ancient and hitherto inviolable law had been arbitrarily cancelled and set aside by the poor priest-ridden, half-idiotic king, without the necessary consent of the Cortes and the nation. This step he had been induced to take by the intrigues of his wife's lovers and her Jesuit priests. The Biscayans, brave, proud, and independent, supported Don Carlos, because he had promised to restore their fueros, or local rights, and exemption from taxation, of which the Queen Regent and the Christinos of the Madrid bureaus threatened, as it was reported, to deprive them. Agile, hardy, fond of war, the Biscayans defended their glens and mountain-side farms with indomitable courage, and the Queen Regent, soon finding that her southern Spaniards could do little against them, looked towards England—Spain's old ally—for aid.

Lieutenant-General Sir G. De Lacy Evans, a brave and restless Peninsular officer, at once set to work, with his usual fire and energy, to organise a British Legion. By the advice of the Privy Council, William the Fourth, on the 10th of June, 1835, issued an order, permitting any English subject to enrol himself in such Legion for the term of two years, and the recruits were armed and accoutred from the Tower of London. In spite of party hatred of Sir De Lacy Evans, as a well-known reformer, there can be no doubt that the Legion was formed of good average men, chiefly young agricultural labourers, eager to rival the deeds of their fathers, starved-out hand-loom weavers from the west of Scotland, and Irish peasants, with a slight, and, indeed, unavoidable infusion of London vagabonds and thieves.

This auxiliary force, slandered with such bitter and untiring malice by the English Conservatives, consisted of two regiments of cavalry, six regiments of infantry, and some artillery. The cavalry included the Reina Isabel Lancers and the Queen's Own Irish Lancers. The infantry comprised the First Regiment (yellow facings), the Fourth Westminster Grenadiers (white facings), the Sixth, or Scotch Grenadiers, the Eighth Highlanders (red facings), the Consolidated Royal Irish, and the Rifle Corps (green and red facings).

The Reverend Mr. Farr, in a book on the Carlist war, has admirably sketched the contrast between the two parties. "See," he says, "the lightly armed Carlist soldier. Helmet he has none; not a strap or bit of leather of any kind has he to en-

cumber him. On his head he wears a small, light, round cloth cap of the country, which has been for a long time, and is even now, a fashionable head-dress with English ladies; only, when a woman wears it, it is generally made of silk or velvet. For uniform, he has a plain metal button, on a grey cloth frock-coat, and a pair of linen or cloth trousers, but there is little uniformity in the colour of the coat or trousers, as it depends entirely on what the Jews at Bayonne can smuggle over the French frontier. He is armed with a musket, and his cartridge-pouch, or canana, as they call them, being fixed round his body with a strap, it rather supports than fatigues him. Not one man in five appeared to me to encumber himself with even a scabbard for his bayonet; in the strap by which he fixes his canana round his waist, he would make a hole, and in that stick the bayonet. On their feet they had sometimes shoes, but oftener the string-made sandal of their country—aspargartas—which travellers, who have been no further than the baths of Bagneres de Bigorre, or De Luchon, in the French Pyrenees, must have observed was worn by their mountain guides in preference to the shoe. While the poor fellows of the Legion—heavily and stiffly armed with their sack-clad backs, and a dangling strap over their shoulders, to hold their cartridge-pouch, and another to hold their bayonet—are panting, sighing, and almost dropping from exhaustion, scarce able to move for want of breath, either when attacking or pursuing the enemy—the Carlist soldier, the bravest, the most terrible, the most active mountain enemy in the world, lightly equipped, and with no encumbrances, with impunity attacks or retreats, as best suits his inclination, from his heavy-clad foes, with a consciousness of superiority which he is not wrong in possessing. With what perfect contempt do the Carlists treat their enemies! They can allow themselves to be apparently surrounded, and when there is just one little open corner left, they run off at last, dashing up the mountains, without ever losing a man; while artillery, cavalry, and every engine of war is of no avail. The only thing a Carlist fears is to be caught on a high road, or level ground, where cavalry can act, or be exposed in the fields to spherical shells, for as they burst in the air, they shoot backwards and forwards, right and left, upwards and downwards; but it is the power of backward firing that utterly disconcerts them, as getting behind a tree, parapet, or barricade, not only gives them no protection, but makes them a surer mark. It is exactly this hide-behind-something warfare which they delight in, from which they can either pounce on their enemy or spring away from him, as best suits their purpose."

The real fighting commenced at San Sebastian, on May the 5th, 1836. The Carlists had stretched a double cordon of fortifications from the river Urimea on the east, to a deep glen which opened on the sea one hundred miles to the west; within that enclosure were some villages, with their tributary orchards and vineyards sprinkled over the heights, a great many scattered houses, and many small fields surrounded by stone walls. These fortifications began about a half a mile from San Sebastian. The defences were ditch-banks, deep cut lanes, breastworks, barricades of barrels filled with earth; moreover, all the farm-houses were viciously loopholed for musketry.

The main road from San Sebastian to Hernani, intersecting the ground, was barricaded in various places, and the heights behind, here and there broken by hollows, were intrenched for cannon. Altogether it was a nasty place. Although part of the Fourth, six companies of the Eighth, and some Spaniards from Santander, had not yet arrived, General Evans, with his usual gallantry, resolved not to wait for reinforcements, but instantly to attack with his mere handful of five thousand raw troops, and fifteen hundred Spaniards. On the 4th, orders came to the field-officers to prepare for a desperate attack the next morning, and the commanding officers harangued their men. Colonel Fortescue said to his regiment of Rifles:

"Neither give nor take quarter; you will be fighting with savages, who will kill all prisoners, so stand to the last man against them."

This rather vague and somewhat savage order was understood by the men to only warn the young soldiers not to surrender to the ferocious Carlists.

It was all bustle that night in San Sebastian, says Sergeant Somerville, the intelligent eye-witness to whose memoir we shall be largely indebted. At one A.M. the regiments began to muster. It was a dark, wet morning, and the roads were heavy for the advance.

"Close up, cover your files, and be silent," was the order of the officers of companies.

At three A.M. the regiments passed through the town gate. General Reid, with the Light Brigade, consisting of the Rifles, the Third, Sixth, and the Chapelgorris, took the right of the enemy's lines towards the river Urimea. The Irish Brigade (Seventh, Ninth, and Tenth), under General Shaw, took the centre, moving towards the St. Bartoleme Convent, while General Chichester's Brigade (First Regiment, and part of the Eighth, and about eight hundred Spaniards) pushed at the enemy's left. The first Carlist outposts were some two hundred yards beyond the convent. The general's orders were to advance as close as possible and then charge at once with the bayonet. At the convent the two brigades were to fan out, and diverge from the centre for the simultaneous attack. Through the humid gloom the Carlist's picket-fires could be seen glaring; the English advanced silently, waiting with held breath for the word that was to let slip the dogs of war. All at once a Carlist sentry shouted: "Qui vive!"

"Chapelgorri! Carajo," was the reply of a Christino, the sound of a musket broke the treacherous stillness, and the sentry fell back dead.

"Forward," cried every commanding officer. Bang, bang, volley after volley, went picket after picket of the Carlists. General Evans pushed on first of all; aides-de-camp began to dash about for orders; a few men fell dead. As daylight began to show each side their opponents, it became necessary here and there to halt, for the defences were formidable to so small a force, however brave. The hot-blooded Chapelgorris, wild to get at the Carlists, and not well disciplined, fired with or without order at the slightest opening. The Seventh Irish, led by Shaw, doggedly brave, pressed forward through a hot fire, the column melting away as it advanced, but still returning no shot till it stormed over stone walls into the Windmill battery, where the five hundred loopholes had each a fierce Carlist behind it. In and about these houses the Carlists, stubbornly meeting the Seventh, bayonet to bayonet, fell in great numbers, and eventually gave way.

"You are doing nobly, Irishmen," said General Evans, riding up.

The first line of fortifications had now given way, but the worst remained. Five pieces of cannon roughly welcomed the assailants of the strongly intrenched redoubt of Lugariz, and to seize it was no joking matter. The Rifles, in the mean time, had done their work, and cleared the posts opposing them. Colonel Tupper, charging on his regiment, was shot through the arm, but he hid the bleeding limb in his cloak, and led his regiment for two hours longer. Almost exhausted by loss of blood he was still facing a heavy fire when he was shot in the head.

"Tell the regiment," he said, as he was dying fast, "that I can no longer command them, but that they are fit to be commanded by any one that will fight at their side."

Colonel Fortescue of the Rifles, "Mad Fortescue," as he was called, a brave and reckless officer, although he was wounded early in the engagement, fought several times hand to hand with the Carlists. With his green sleeves turned up, he pushed through bushes, and over walls, now up to his knees in a ditch, now dragging his men through a dyke, till his clothes were nearly torn off him. The Seventh and Eighth were repulsed in three charges, and lost many men. At last a party of the Tenth came to reinforce them. Old Colonel Fitzgerald leading them, riding whip in hand, leaped over a low stone wall. Volley after volley battered down the men, and all the officers of the three regiments, excepting the old colonel, fell. He stood there almost alone among the spluttering Carlists' bullets, shouting:

"Irishmen — Tenth, Ninth, Seventh! Munster boys! bog-trotters! ragamuffins! Come on with old Charley" (his pet name in his regiment). "I'll stand here by myself till I'm shot, if ye don't come on."

Many soldiers fell dead as he spoke, and some of the wounded were again struck; but the moment he had uttered the last words, an Irishman cried, "By me shoul! an' ye'll not die by yourself, old Charley," and he cleared the wall. The whole regiment followed like deer, and, bayonets down, instantly charged. Many officers and men fell here (wounded); amongst the former Capt. C. Thompson of the Ninth, "a gallant, thorough-going fellow."

Now commenced the attacks over the slippery, steep hill-sides on the fort of Lugariz; but in several attempts the Legion was repulsed. In the very nick of time, the Phœnix and Salamander bore full sail into the bay with the Fourth and Eighth Regiments. Hurrah! off darted the boats, down crowded the soldiers into them; and the moment they touched the shore, off went the knapsacks on the sand in the care of a guard.

"Come on, you grenadiers," said old Colonel Godfrey, "and you little beggars in the other companies there, come on, and we'll soon let them see they haven't got it all to themselves."

General Evans soon came up, and shook hands with the old colonel, and told him he was just in time.

"Scotchmen!" he cried, addressing the new arrivals, "you will not have much to do, but I know you will be proud to share the glory with the Sixth Regiment. Your countrymen are carrying everything before them."

By this time the Phœnix and the other vessels had anchored close to the shore, and were opening a tremendous cannonade, with terrible effect, on the fort of Lugariz, sixteen hundred yards distant. Round one more corner, and the Eighth and Fourth would be under fire.

"Push on, never mind who falls," cried Godfrey. "The whole—attention! with cartridge, prime and load. Not one fire a shot till he is ordered. Silence in the centre there—silence! Fix bayonets, carry your arms at the short trail. Companies will follow in succession from the right. Grenadiers, right face—march! Right wheel—double!"

And round the corner they swung, through a storm of bullets, and with rockets darting overhead, or knocking holes in the Spanish lines. The heavy cannon of the vessels soon smashed down a corner of the redoubt, and a thirteen-inch shell bursting just inside the breach, and scattering the Spaniards, Lugariz was taken at the rush. Adjutant Alley of the Fourth, scaling another part of the fort wall, was left alone, the men who followed being all killed or tumbled back. A pistol-shot from a Carlist officer stretched Alley dead just as the other regiments poured in through the breach. A corporal named Oakley rushed at the Carlist officer, who was just snatching up a loaded musket from a dead soldier, and first stabbed and then shot him. The Christino guerillas in this action were often seen tearing wounded men with their teeth.

Just as the second line of defence was nearly carried, General Shaw had, with the Seventh Regiment, to attack a fortified and intrenched house. Two companies of the Eighth backed up the somewhat fatigued men of the Seventh, already much shattered by charges on strong posts held by the enemy. At the first shower of bullets they hesitated. General Shaw, in his usual stern way, at once thundered out: "Halt! The Seventh shall not have the honour of going—they hesitate." Then turning to the other detachment he said: "Mitchell and Hogg, move up with those companies of the Eighth, take that house from the enemy, and let nothing prevent you."

Majors Mitchell and Hogg, two very brave and beloved officers, with Captain Larkham and Lieutenant Fiske, instantly led their men against the house, which was blazing from a hundred loopholes, and wreathed with sulphureous smoke. Mitchell and Hogg almost immediately fell severely wounded, but they lay among the dead waving their swords and cheering the men on. Soon after Larkham and Fiske also fell, and about one-half of the non-commissioned officers and privates also shed their blood before that fatal stronghold. Eventually some companies of the Irish Brigade carried the place with great loss. In one unsuccessful attack many of the English wounded were left under the cruel fire of the Carlists, who were singling out the wounded. Two men of the Sixth lay on a ditch bank, trying to roll themselves into the ditch out of danger. A soldier with two broken legs was shot directly. The second man was a sergeant, and an officer offered any one a dollar who would venture out of cover and bring him in.

"I'll bring him here on my back," cried a soldier. "Hold my firelock some of ye, I'll soon let ye see me go for him."

The brave fellow had just got the wounded man in his arms when he was shot dead. Presently two more men ventured, one after the other, and were both killed. Soon after, the spot from whence the shots came was attacked and carried, and the sergeant saved.

Soon after this, Colonel Chichester and the Third Regiment took a resolutely defended post, where the Carlist chief, Segastibelza and his staff had hoisted a red flag, to signify "No quarter." Evans himself had been the first to mount the enemy's barricades sword in hand, and was often in the hottest of the fight. Colonel Woolridge, Lord William Paget, and others of his staff, were wounded close to him while he was leading an assault in person. Fourteen field-officers had already fallen, with upwards of twenty captains, forty subalterns, and five hundred and ninety-four rank and file.

The Carlists made their last stand at a point that Colonel Godfrey attacked.

"Come on, my brave fellows," he cried, "don't let those front regiments get all the praise—double, grenadiers."

"Hurrah, hurrah!" the whole regiment yelled, their pieces at the charge. A man beginning a second hurrah fell with a bullet in his head. The fellow behind him, tumbled over by a ball that struck the square brass plate of his side-belt, leaped up again, and marched on singing. The Carlists, rallying, opened a rattling fire on the advancing regiments. As Captain Shields was cheering his company, and crying, "Come on, my good fellows, come on," he was shot in his sword arm. His brother Robert, an ensign, dashed on, calling to the men to follow him and let his brother lie. The captain, binding up his arm, took his sword in his left hand, and said, "Let my arm go to mischief. My company will be the first to take the position, and I must be with them;" but faintness soon came on, and he had to be carried off the field. Corporal Oakley, at the moment the Carlists were recrossing a ditch, and beginning to rally, cried out, "So much for Buckingham" (a celebrated line of Edmund Kean's in Richard the Third then current), and shot dead a Carlist officer who was leading back his men. The orders were then given to go forward and storm a house. It was a farm on a hillside, and many stone walls and ditches had to be cleared in the face of the Carlist fire. The two men of the Legion who first broke in were instantly shot, and the house became full of hot smoke, for the firing up and down stairs was incessant. The Chapelgorris as usual cruelly bayoneted all the Carlist wounded, and shot women without mercy. The search was keen for wine and money. Cows and fowls were soon despatched, and the chests and drawers broken open, fugitives hiding under beds or in barrels, were killed. The officers had to threaten the plunderers with death before they would desist. The bugles then sounded a recal, all the regiments were reformed, and a muster was made, to find out the killed, wounded, and missing. As General Evans rode past the regiments with clothes stained, wet, and torn, he was loudly cheered. He took off his hat as he trotted along, and continued remarking, "You have done well all of you; you have made a noble beginning." Parties of men were then sent out to cover up the dead, and to bring in the wounded. One poor fellow was found with twenty-nine bayonet wounds in him, the Carlists having tortured him till they were driven away. On a beautiful budding day of May, when the swell of the long green wave rolling in from the Bay of Biscay was dying away unbroken on the shore, the officers who fell in this stubborn conflict were buried.

On the morning of the 28th there was more fighting. The river Urimea had to be crossed, but the bridge had been destroyed. General Chichester's Brigade (the Rifles, and the Tenth, Fourth, and Eighth Regiments), part of General Jarreguay's Division (the Chapelgorris, and two battalions of Spaniards), were ordered to ford through the strong current under cover of thirty pieces of cannon. This hot, simultaneous fire disordering the enemy, the English and Christinos dashed in and cleared the position at the point of the bayonet, and almost without firing a shot. In half an hour our nimble sailors had thrown over the swift river, one hundred and fifty yards wide, a strong and permanent pontoon bridge, which artillery, waggons, cavalry, and six men abreast, traversed to and fro for six months after. Lord John Hay captured an armed schooner and five pieces of artillery, and the town of Passages was that day occupied by the Legion. The Carlists were, by this conquest, cut off from all connexion with the sea in this direction, and they would have found this a very serious loss had not the French authorities often permitted them to pass military stores and ammunition.

The Legion, with the Chapelgorris and some of Jarreguay's regiments, now occupied the east bank of the Urimea, from the convent of Antigua, on the north-west, to the villages and heights of Alza, four or five miles distant, on the south-east. In the rear of Alza lay the town and port of Passages. The hills were covered with vineyards and corn-fields, the white cottages glittered amid fields of maize, wheat, and beans. Lord John Hay and General Evans were now hoping to push on to the frontier of France, and thus cut off the Carlists from all supplies from the province of Guipuscoa. To prevent this, and to revenge the recent defeat, the Carlist chief, Casa Eguia, resolved to attack the Legion, and, if possible, win back Passages.

On the morning of the 6th of June, 1836, the Carlists made a feint on the picket near the Ametzegana hill, a little to the left of the English centre, the real attack being intended for the village and fort of Alza, from whence Passages could have been commanded.

Three hours after sunrise the real attack commenced; the men, back in quarters, were sleeping or smoking, after their rough morning meal of wine and bread, when a cry ran through the town of "Turn out, turn out." The drums rattled, the bugles sounded everywhere—the "dressing call," the "turn out the whole," the "fall in," the "advance;" last of all, the ominous "double quick."

The soldiers grumbling, wrangling for their coats and muskets, hurried to the front, for smoke was rising in volumes in the direction of Alza. There the attack commenced. The First Regiment held the church and some loopholed houses. The Carlists, stealing up through an orchard, shot two sentries, and cut to pieces the picket, bayoneting the wounded, as usual, without mercy. A sentinel, who stood at the back of the church, had both his feet cut off by the first cannon-ball, and the same infernal shot, rebounding from the corner of the building, cut one of the Legion in two pieces, and carried off the arms of another. General Chichester, with his usual courage and skill, instantly lined the churchyard wall with the men of the First Regiment, and let fly his aides-de-camp for assistance. But the Carlist Navarrese regiments, the bravest and best soldiers of their party, advancing through a dreadful fire, forced their way through the fields, and, after a severe loss, wrested back the position from the First Regiment. One of the daring Navarrese officers, seeing General Chichester within reach, dashed at him, followed by others, and grappled with him as he rode. Chichester instantly shot one of his assailants dead, cut down, right and left, the two men who had clutched his bridle, darted from the rest, rallied the First Regiment, and, aided by reinforcements, retaliated terribly upon the Carlists.

The enemy had also attempted a simultaneous attack on the western extremity of the English lines, but soon retiring, General Evans ordered all his disposable troops round to defend the Ametza, and retake the village and heights. In this fight the Chapelgorris rendered themselves especially conspicuous by their daring ferocity and revengeful cruelty. The Carlists and Christinos (the white and red caps) were, in many cases, known personally to each other, for they were nearly all Guipuscoan mountaineers, some of them relatives, a few even brothers.

"They met on the hill-side near Alza," says a spectator. "We, at some distance, but on rather higher ground, had faced the Navarrese, and were for a time kept back, while they also stood, checked by our fire. The ground was rough, woody, and intersected by numerous hedges, so that it was difficult to advance; but this enabled us to keep our ground the better against the numbers opposing us. The green sunny fields and the orchards of yesterday were now a blaze of fire and smoke. We saw the Chapelgorris driven back, and those in front of us, emboldened by that, made a strong onset to force us, but a heavy and steady fire scattered them on the earth as they came forward. The Chapelgorris rallied, and their opponents in turn retreated, the wounded being left lying. As the visitors came up with them the bayonets were dashed into dead bodies by those foremost, while others more leisurely put cartridges into the mouths of the wounded, and blew them up, pinned the bodies of two dying ones together by a bayonet, cut off heads, holding them up in the air to the enemy, and perpetrated other atrocities too horrible to be told. The retreat of the Carlists was but short. They retaliated the full measure of slaughter and barbarity that they had suffered, for the Chapelgorris were again compelled to give way. A few of these, being cut off in the corner of a field, could not by any possibility escape, and they were seen to close with their assailants. Shortly afterwards, on the ground being retaken, their bodies were found, but mixed with an almost equal number of Carlist dead. A Carlist officer was lying gasping, while an antagonist had seized him by the cheek with his teeth; the latter was dead, having been stabbed by the officer, but still held fast; and this was the cause of the Carlist's death, who, but for this, would have made his escape, not being otherwise wounded. This officer was immediately recognised by some of the Chapelgorris as the once powerful chief of a guerilla band, in which some of them had been subordinates. He had split the band in two at one time for a bribe, which caused them now to be on adverse sides, and the one who had seized him in the manner described had been second in command under him, had met him that day, was disarmed, but had wrestled with him, and thus played his part of the mutual revenge. There was an 'advance' sounding by our bugles. Two companies of the Sixth Regiment, with great bravery, joined the Chapelgorris, and, driving the enemy back

with considerable loss on both sides, took possession of part of the disputed ground. Our own and the other regiments of General Chichester's Brigade advanced also, and, after having gone forward for some distance against a heavy fire, there was a general charge made, and the Carlists, tremendously peppered by shot, and bayoneted in their retreat, abandoned their ground, and fell back on Alza. Perseverance on our side soon drove them from that position in like manner."

As the Carlists retreated they set fire to the houses, in order to deprive the Legion of shelter, and the English pressed forward in blinding darkness, the sound of the bugles alone directing them. The result of this was that the Fourth Regiment, mistaking the Eighth for the enemy, fired upon them in flank, and all but occasioned a retreat. Soon after this the Carlists again came on, headed this time, not only by their officers, but by two priests in full dress, holding aloft crucifixes, to incite the men against the accursed Protestants. All at once the gloom before them burst into lightning flashes, and volley after volley was poured on the Carlist front ranks. Many fell, others tumbled into ditches, scrambled through gaps, or leaped over walls.

"Forward—forward, men; fix bayonets," cried the maddened Christino officers; the bugles rang out the charge. "Viva!" shouted the frenzied Chapelgorris. A wild hurrah was given by the Legion, and the English bore forward like a red deluge. One of the luckless priests tore off his robe and shovel-hat, the other made for a hole in a bramble hedge, but stuck hopelessly among the thorns. As the poor old man kicked and sprawled in this dilemma, a huge Scotch grenadier pricked him behind with his bayonet, eager to strip him of his silver-buckled shoes, his silver cross, and ivory crucifix, swearing at him all the time, in a mixture of Scotch and broken Spanish oaths. Other men coming up, the grenadier, without ceremony, slipped off his reverence's shoes and put them on his own feet. The next man snatched the Carlist priest's silver spectacles and crucifix. Two others gutted his sash of all its dollars and pesetas, but no one offered him actual violence. The Carlists, just then rallying to rescue their priest from the foul heretics, were firmly withstood by the legionaries. At that moment a red-capped Chapelgorri coming up, cast his eye on the unfortunate half-stripped priest. Shrieking an oath, he fired at the captive, and following the bullet with a savage bayonet thrust, he beat in the poor man's skull with the butt-end of his musket, leaped on the body, grinding his teeth, as he pounded down the head and breast-bone of the miserable ecclesiastic who had dared to doubt the legal right of the little Queen Isabella Segunda. Such is the ferocity of party warfare, such are the crimes for which the men of the brave British Legion were held accountable by their enemies.

Soon after this, Colonel Godfrey of the Eighth, dismounting from his horse to lead his men through a low-boughed orchard, the animal, by a slight retrograde movement of the regiment, was left half-way between a body of Carlists and Christinos. Two Carlists advancing to seize it were shot down. A party of six men of a light company of the Legion at once volunteered to fetch the horse. The moment, however, they left their cover, the Carlists fired a volley, and four out of the six fell dead.

"Let the brute alone," said Colonel Godfrey; "if he will stand there like a fool, let him. I'll not have my brave young boys shot for nothing."

A Chapelgorri then offered to go, and began bargaining about the number of dollars of the reward. Corporal Oakley (a brave fellow before mentioned) at once said:

"No Chapelgorri shall go, and leave me behind, afraid. If a Chapelgorri can venture for payment, I know who will do it for honour."

The moment Oakley started, the soldiers began betting against each other wine, bread, beef, tobacco, dollars and pesetas—he would or would not return with the prize. The bullets were already scattering the dust around Oakley's feet. He got hold of the horse, but the brute was fractious, and began to rear. More bets. Oakley fell, but only for a moment; the horse's rein had been cut through by a Carlist bullet. The regiment cheered as Oakley rose again, and the Carlists fired a fresh volley. This time a shot struck the horse, and luckily sent him scampering back towards his master, and Oakley, after having been exposed for nearly seven minutes to a continual fire from fifty of the enemy, returned back in safety.

A universal cheer rang through the woods as the bugles now again sounded the advance. The scene at this crisis is picturesquely described by our chief autho-

rity, Sergeant Somerville. "A deafening thunder of musketry," he says, "and the rushing roar of rockets blazing over our heads, drowned the hurrahs of the English and the vivas of the Spaniards. Some who hurrahed suddenly stopped, and fell down without a word. Some exclaimed, 'My leg!' 'my head!' 'my arm!' and were left behind to groan. The hedgerows, and the fields, and the houses that had hitherto been lying clear from the smoke in the sun and the south wind, beyond where the battle had been, now emitted smoke and fire, while in our rear the strife was dying. Around us were the ill-fated dead and dying of the enemy, and the cheers and vivas of our own troops as we pushed on and drove back the retreating foe beyond the positions held by them previous to the attack on us in the morning. At a distance in front were the inhabitants hurrying off their cows and pigs; the elder children leading the younger; the mother with the babies, her sheets and shirts, hastening after them. The dusty coloured bakers who had been busily preparing the Carlist rations in some of the houses, were seen making their escape with each a bag of flour or bread, assisted by the retreating soldiers. Ours in turn shared the bread and the wine, and whatever could be had, as they came up to these houses. Some dared to advance further in front than others for the mere purpose of being first at the plunder, and some were in ditches into which they had tumbled, professing to be wounded. One of these, an English officer, was observed by one of his own men. Two or three soldiers immediately threatened to shoot him if he did not come out of his hiding-place."

The plundering now became universal over a wide area of fields, orchards, and houses. The enemy in this engagement lost above a thousand men; Evans nearly half that number.

Three days later, before daybreak, the Carlists made a desperate attempt to recover a height commanding the town of Passages, occupied by the marines and their artillery. A marine officer, seeing them emerge from cover, quickly and carefully prepared a heavy dose of canister shot, and with one dreadful, simultaneous volley tumbled the whole force, dead, wounded, and living, down the rocky paths, and hotly peppered the surviving fugitives.

After a dangerous mutiny amongst the men of several of the English regiments, who were, it must be said, neglected by the Spanish government, ill paid, half starved, and cruelly flogged for the slightest offence, the Carlists, on October the 1st, again attacked the Ametza lines, and were again repulsed with the loss of more than one thousand men. Of the Legion there fell under four hundred, including thirty-seven officers. The Lancers behaved very gallantly on this occasion, and Evans, always to the fore, had a ball pass through one of his ears. We must pass over with a mere word the poisoning of English soldiers at Vittoria, and the garotting of Don José Elgoez, the chief baker. Some fifteen hundred men died at this place of the poisoned bread and aquadiente. Nor can we stop to describe the burning alive of eleven English prisoners by the Christinos, or the taking of Bilboa. On March the 16th, there was hard fighting near Hernani, when (owing to the dastardly treachery of Espartero, and the jealous or cowardly Spaniards) the English had to retreat with the loss of nearly nine hundred men. The town of Irun was soon after taken, Andoain fell, and Espartero, with thirty thousand men, eventually entered Madrid. A few months later, a hundred and twenty-seven of the Legion, with thirteen officers, deserted by the Christino regiments, capitulated at Andoain, and were foully butchered by the cruel enemy. In May, 1837, the Legion was disbanded, and Evans returned to England. Not long after, Colonel O'Connell's new legion of thirteen hundred and ninety-three men, disgusted with the Spaniards, also broke up. There is quite proof enough that, under a man like Wellington, "the Isle of Dogians," as the Tories called the British Legion, would have rivalled the deeds of the heroes of Salamanca and of Waterloo.

LELGARDE'S INHERITANCE.

IN TWELVE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

BEHOLD Lelgarde settled in her new possessions, queening it in the gloomy old house and stiff gardens, which had not seen anything so fresh and sweet, I am sure, for a very long time. Athelstanes lay in a wild part of Yorkshire, only to be approached by a network of railways, every one of which was at daggers drawn with all the others; stage-coaches lingered there still, and the nearest station was ten miles off. The Athelings had been there ever since the year one. It was their boast that

> Atheling of Athelstane
> Stood on his hearth when the Conqueror came.

And they prided themselves on the fair Saxon colouring, which, from generation to generation, had been as completely a possession of the Athelings as their coat of arms. I do not know if they had been careful to choose light-complexioned wives, but certainly, with few exceptions, every family portrait had the same characteristics of sunny hair and fair delicate colouring, matching well with their Saxon names. The house itself was Elizabethan—the regular E shape, the drawing-room occupying one projection, the other contained, as we were given to understand, "poor Miss Hilda's apartments;" and the old housekeeper, who offered the information, sighed as she spoke. She was the only old servant who had chosen to remain; the rest appeared to harbour resentment against Lelgarde for the slight she had put on Athelstanes in her childish days, or perhaps for being young, or for not being Miss Etheldreda; any how they declined to stay, but Mrs. Bracebridge remained, and, though she began by treating us with a deadly politeness, which froze the marrow in our bones, she was now gradually succumbing to the irresistible influence of Lelgarde's graciousness, a graciousness which had in it a certain touch of hauteur that probably recalled Miss Etheldreda, as lemonade might remind one of vinegar. I need not say much about the grounds, which were not beautiful; a wide flat paddock in front, not large enough to be dignified by the name of park, walled kitchen-gardens, and a stiff square flower-garden at the back, plantations closing it all in, and beyond, wild moors stretching away into the distance. This was Athelstanes. When I add that the handsome furniture had seen its best days, that there was a great deal of white paint and white dimity, in vivid contrast to a great deal of dark polished oak, that everybody's bedroom seemed to lead in and out of everybody else's, and that every square inch of wall was covered with family portraits, I have said all that need be said of Lelgarde's domain.

For the first few days, Lelgarde was extremely busy: the engaging of new servants, the looking over of inventories, and ceaseless interviews with the various retainers, occupying every moment. She was looking rather oppressed with her new responsibilities, but I could not perceive that the sight of Athelstanes in any degree awakened old recollections.

"Come," I said, one wild wet afternoon, when I found her leaning her little tired head on her hand, after holding one of her business levees, "you look as if you had had enough of it, I must say. Come and do something more amusing."

"What can one do on such a day?" Lelgarde said, drawing her scarlet cloak up round her shoulders, with a shiver. She was a very barometer, and withered up in cold or rainy weather like any tropical plant.

"Just the day to let Mrs. Bracebridge take us all over the house; she is dying to do so."

Lelgarde agreed: so, prudently wrapped up, we summoned the housekeeper, and prepared to make the grand tour.

Going steadily over anything, be it picture-gallery, museum, or big house, always has the effect of leaving one sodden and depressed. By the time we had done it all, Lelgarde and I were both in this state, and thankful when an unexpected staircase suddenly landed us in the front hall again. Here hung the principal modern portraits; among them the old squire, and what I had soon recognised as a boyish likeness of Lelgarde's father.

"And who is the one hanging next to him, the very handsome young woman in the blue satin?" I asked.

"That," replied Mrs. Bracebridge, reverentially, "was my late mistress, Miss Atheling."

Somehow I had felt sure of it when I asked the question; the high, delicate features, and hard expression, were so exactly what I had pictured Miss Etheldreda. Hard—that was the word for her—just, I dare say, and therefore liked by her dependents, but certainly as disagreeable a woman, with all her beauty, as eye ever looked upon.

"Now," continued Mrs. Bracebridge, "would you like to see poor Miss Hilda's rooms? I don't know why I go on keeping them locked: will you like to see them, ma'am?"

"By all means," answered Lelgarde, eagerly, for we had exchanged small jokes about the Blue Chamber, which was always kept closed. When opened, it looked commonplace enough: handsome, faded furniture, a capacious invalid couch, a very curious tall cabinet of ebony, inlaid with ivory, heavy crimson curtains hanging low over the narrow window—this was all.

"She was a great sufferer," the old woman said, softly; "for nearly fifteen years she never left this room, and the one next it, poor lady."

"What was her illness?"

Mrs. Bracebridge hesitated, I thought, and then answered:

"A nervous affection, ma'am; she lost, little by little, the use of her limbs; my mistress nursed her devotedly, and was the only person who could manage the poor lady for her good."

Shut up for fifteen years in that room, and managed for one's good by that horrible cold-eyed woman. What a life! But something besides struck me in Mrs. Bracebridge's tone. I wondered if the poor thing had been mad, and if that inheritance, too, threatened my Lelgarde. I turned to look at her, and saw her standing, quite intent on the old cabinet, with a puzzled, lost expression on her face, which surprised me.

"Where can I have seen a cabinet like this before?" she asked, knitting her brows in perplexity; "I seem to know it quite well. Is there anything in it, Mrs. Bracebridge?"

Mrs. Bracebridge did not know. Mr. Graves had overhauled and superintended the valuing of everything, she said; and the key, with several others, had been given to Lelgarde. She at once produced the bunch, and selecting the key that fitted, opened the doors, revealing a quaint nest of pigeon-holes and drawers.

"We will not keep you, Mrs. Bracebridge," she said; "I have a fancy to look this over, and this is just the afternoon for it."

Mrs. Bracebridge demurred, with a glance at the empty grate; but Lelgarde vowed she was not at all cold, and was evidently bent on her search.

"That is right," she cried, when we were left alone; and she eagerly began to examine the drawers. The result was disappointing. Miss Hilda, whatever had been her woes, had been too wise to write them down for the amusement of future generations. One closely-written manuscript book turned out to contain receipts for cookery and for knitting; there was a herbarium, which had come to a standstill in the middle, an old-fashioned album, also ending half-way through, and several sketch-books. These last were rather interesting; they contained graceful, slight outlines, with no great force about them, and to many the dates were added, dates of six or seven-and-twenty years ago. Here and there was a bolder sketch, of quite a different stamp of merit; landscapes, chiefly —some scenes in the neighbourhood; and we both noticed that in almost every foreground the same figure was introduced: that of a slight girl, not unlike Lelgarde herself, sitting, standing, or on horseback; it constantly recurred, always unmistakably the same person.

"And not Miss Etheldreda," said Lelgarde. "Could it be this poor Hilda in her young days? If so, I think this artist, whoever he was, must have been rather fond of Miss Hilda." Lelgarde blushed, I observed, and sighed. "There is something sad in looking over these things," she said, rather, I thought, to account for the sigh. "Poor Hilda was young and merry then, I suppose, like me. How little she thought what her life was going to be!"

As she spoke she was incessantly passing her fingers over the back of the little recess which we were then exploring; a restless movement which she had been continually repeating ever since we had begun our examination.

"It is strange how well I seem to know this piece of furniture," she said; "but I fancy there ought to be some secret drawer or cupboard here somewhere, only I cannot find out how to open it."

"Ought to be? What do you mean?"

"I cannot explain; that is just what puzzles me; only I feel as if there ought to be—just that."

Were old recollections reviving, I wondered; but what an unlikely thing to awaken them! It was getting too dark to carry our researches further, and the cold was becoming intense.

"Come," I said, "we shall catch our deaths. Come and get warm."

"You disturbed me," she cried, petulantly; "I had just got hold of it. I only seem to want one link more to remember something."

She started and clung to me; for close, close to us, just behind the cabinet, was a rustle, as of a sweeping dress, and the dull thud of some falling body; a gust, at the same moment, swept through the room, and a wild splash of rain against the window seemed to bring darkness with it. We clung together, like two fools as we were, and Lelgarde shrieked aloud. At that sound Mrs. Bracebridge appeared with a candle, and I at least grew brave at the sight of it.

"A mouse, I dare say, ma'am," she remarked, deferential but contemptuous, in answer to our apologetic statement.

"No; there is something—something white," gasped Lelgarde, pointing to the dark corner.

Mrs. Bracebridge stooped to examine it.

"Yes, indeed, I quite forgot that it had been put away behind the cabinet. You

must have shaken it down, ma'am, in pulling out the drawers."

"And it is?"

"Poor Miss Hilda's picture, ma'am, that is all."

CHAPTER IV.

LELGARDE and I had dined, and were sitting by the drawing-room fire afterwards, when my sister said, giving a shrinking look into all the dark corners:

"Joan, I hate that dreary room opposite. I shall have it locked up again, and Mrs. Bracebridge shall keep the key."

"So as to turn it into a haunted chamber at once! My dear, before it had been shut up a week, you would have ghosts, and rumours of ghosts, demoralising the whole establishment! You would never keep a servant, depend upon it."

"It has given me the horrors," she answered, with a shiver.

"Because we were geese enough to be frightened at nothing. Come, Lelgarde, let me advise you. Have a fire lighted there; open all the windows, do it up with a set of Cretonne chintz, all over blue and scarlet dickey-birds; ask the seven vicarage children to tea there, and let them make themselves ill with plum-cake, and greasy with bread-and-butter, and you will find Miss Hilda's ghost is laid in no time."

The door opened slowly, causing Lelgarde to jump almost into my arms.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am, if I startled you," said Mrs. Bracebridge, advancing out of the shadow with a large square of canvas in her arms; "you desired me to bring this for you to look at after dinner—poor Miss Hilda's picture."

"Tiresome old woman!" I thought, "as if we had not had enough of Miss Hilda for one day;" but the housekeeper was only obeying Lelgarde's orders, and I could say nothing, so we proceeded to look at the portrait. We both exclaimed with surprise at seeing its unfinished state: the drapery of the head and shoulders was merely sketched out, not coloured at all. The face only was complete, and the hair again died away into indistinctness, in a way that gave a strange ghastly look to the features—high, delicate features, so like Miss Atheling's, that the difference of expression was the more striking. For this was a gentle face, so sweet that one half forgave its utter weakness. I quite forgave it, when I thought of the hard, stern face hung in the hall, and recollected that Etheldreda was many years older than her sister, and had doubtless ruled her with a rod of iron all her days. The two faces seemed to me to tell their own story, and I could understand how each sister had unconsciously helped to make the other what she had been. There was a bright smile on the painted lips—a laugh in the pretty blue eyes; and yet "Poor young thing!" were the words which rose to my lips as I looked.

"Ah! you may say that, ma'am," responded Mrs. Bracebridge, with a sigh—rather a leading sigh, I thought, as if she longed to be asked what she was sighing for. Lelgarde did what answered the purpose, in exclaiming:

"Why was this lovely picture never finished and framed? And oh! who could have done that?" For right across the canvas, barely sparing the face, was a broad rough splash of colour, as if an angry or careless hand had dashed aside a wet brush, not recking where it went.

"Ah! it is a long story," said the old woman, evidently dying to tell it.

"If it is a doleful one, pray let it wait till to-morrow," I said; but Lelgarde waved me aside, impatiently, and, pointing to an arm-chair,

"Then sit down and tell it, Mrs. Bracebridge," she said, "and let me pour you out a cup of tea meanwhile. You see," she added, with her pretty graciousness, "you belong so completely to this place, so much more than I do; and whatever you know about the family, I think I I ought to know: so please begin."

"I will pour out the tea," I said, and betook myself to the massive silver salver and teapot, much amused at Lelgarde taking the high moral tone, to choke any qualms of conscience at gratifying her curiosity by a gossip with the old servant.

"It is going on for seven-and-twenty years, ma'am, since Miss Atheling's portrait was taken and this one commenced," Mrs. Bracebridge solemnly began, "and the gentleman as took both was a Mr. Hamilton, one of them artist gentlemen from London. The old squire was living then, you are aware, ladies, and he had this young gentleman down for the summer months—which many wondered as he liked to do so—to take the young ladies' portraits, and to give Miss Hilda lessons, and to make drawings about the place."

"How old were my cousins at this time?" Lelgarde asked from the shadowy corner where she sat intently listening.

"Let me see: Miss Atheling would have been over thirty, and Miss Hilda, I mind me, was just of age. I was lately come,

then, myself, and was head housemaid under the old housekeeper—nurse, as she was mostly called, having nursed both the ladies, and the little brothers as died between."

"Was she here, when I——" Lelgarde hesitated, knitting her brows as if in a painful effort to remember.

"She was, ma'am; but she had then for some years been Miss Hilda's attendant, and Miss Atheling had been pleased to put me in her place, as housekeeper. I need not tell you, ladies," she went on, "that there is, and always will be, gossip in the servants' hall, let the upper servants check it as they may; and it was not long before we were all talking about Miss Hilda and Mr. Hamilton."

Lelgarde and I thought of the sketch-book, and exchanged glances.

"You see, Miss Atheling never seemed to think of Miss Hilda as anything but a child; and sure she did look like it, and always took it as natural that she should be treated as such—she was so meek-spirited; and certainly nothing, in a general way, could have happened to her, even to the altering of the way she dressed her hair, but what Miss Atheling should know of it. But just that summer it fell out that the squire began of the illness which carried him off later—some terrible complaint in his inside."

"And Miss Atheling was with him a great deal, I suppose," I said, hastily, as the old woman seemed inclined to plunge into unpleasant details.

"Night and day, ma'am; and all that time Mr. Hamilton was thought to be busy making his sketches about the place, and Miss Hilda practising her music, and all that, in the room yonder, which was then called the schoolroom. But we servants, ma'am, could have told a different tale."

"It was a pity you did not," said I, virtuously.

"It was nurse's place, ma'am, she being the housekeeper, not ours; and nurse could refuse nothing to Miss Hilda, not if it had been a knife to cut her own throat, we often used to say. Well, the rights of it I cannot tell you, ladies, for I was never made acquainted with it; but one day, it is certain that Miss Atheling came into the schoolroom, and found Mr. Hamilton painting her sister's portrait, or, maybe, pretending to paint it; and what passed I cannot say—for Miss Atheling was not one to make any noise about her anger; but I met her in the hall, taking Miss Hilda to her room; and her face, ladies—it was terrible."

"And what happened?"

"Mr. Hamilton left the house that very hour, and the portrait was huddled away in a lumber-room, and there it stayed till long, long afterwards. I saw it one day, in poor Miss Hilda's room, put away behind the cabinet; I suppose nurse must have brought it down at her request, poor lady."

"And what did my cousin do to her sister?" asked Lelgarde, with dilated eyes, as if she expected to hear that she had tortured her.

"Her look was enough to cow Miss Hilda, ma'am, at any time; beyond that, I never heard that the poor young lady was punished; I am sure Miss Atheling's one wish was to keep it all from folk's knowledge, and specially the old squire. And in the autumn they all went to London for Mr. Atheling's health, and stayed away the whole winter."

"Did you go with them?"

"No, ma'am, only Miss Atheling's maid, and one or two men-servants, as they stayed at a hotel. And nurse went too, and that was the beginning of her being about Miss Hilda; for the maid, she had enough to do with helping Miss Atheling attending upon the squire: oh! he was a great sufferer."

"Did he die in London? I forget," asked Lelgarde.

"Oh, no, ma'am, they all came back in early spring; and Miss Hilda, she looked almost as like to die as her father; all the spirit seemed to have gone out of her: days and days she never stirred from her room: but Miss Atheling was that wrapped up in the squire, that she saw nothing else. At last nurse told her that poor Miss Hilda must have mild sea-air, which had saved her from a decline before, and might again; leastways nothing else would. And so at last she got leave to take her quite away by the seaside, down somewhere in Devonshire. I could see that it angered my poor mistress that she could not go with her, and she was angry too, maybe, that Miss Hilda would not rather stay at home and die, than go so far away when her father might be dying any moment; but there, there was no denying how ill she was—and she let her go."

"Was she away when the squire died?"

"No, ma'am, he seemed to rally for a bit, and it was not till quite the end of the summer that he died; and, as it fell out, the very day poor Miss Hilda came home. Shall I ever forget her face when she came

out of the sick-room? How she flung herself down, and called herself wicked and undutiful, blaming herself, no doubt, for having been away; unless, poor lady, she had anything else to reproach herself with. Nurse was as close as the grave; but I know folks did talk——"

She hesitated; and I saw no occasion to rake up dead and gone scandal for Lelgarde's innocent ears; though I had long been thinking that if these were Atheling manners, one might as well be Smith.

"And how soon did Miss Hilda's long illness set in?" I asked.

Mrs. Bracebridge shook her head; and, for the first time, the tears came into her eyes.

"Ah! ma'am, it was at that very time; the very week her papa was buried; but 'twasn't that, 'twas the sudden shock as did it."

"What shock?"

"That Mr. Hamilton's death, ma'am; he was killed somewhere in those snow-mountains where the gentlefolks is always meeting with their deaths; and Miss Hilda, she read it on the newspaper, without a word to prepare her. There is no doubt she was much attached to him, poor young lady."

"I dare say her sister was sorry for them," said Lelgarde, her voice sinking as she uttered this improbable conjecture.

"Well, ma'am, my mistress thought a great deal of the honour of the family; perhaps it was a blessing looked at so; but naturally Miss Hilda could not be expected to see it. However, I should not talk, for whatever words they had 'twas never before their servants. Only once I did—I did chance to hear"—(Mrs. Bracebridge became rather confused)—"just an angry word or two. Miss Etheldreda was telling her how she ought to be ashamed to give way—how she ought rather to give thanks on her bended knees—that it might be this was an imposition of Providence."

"Interposition?" I suggested.

"Just so, ma'am, to save her and the family from disgrace. 'Disgrace!' Miss Hilda did cry out then. I never heard her speak up so proud, though her voice was all of a shake; and then my mistress, she went on talking, but she would always hush her voice when she was in anger; and all I heard was something about seeing her sister dead at her feet—and then distinct came the words, 'killed him with my own hands,' and then, oh! dear, what a cry Miss Hilda did give, and, poor young lady, she went off into one of those terrible hysteric fits which grew upon her more and more—not that my mistress would ever have done such a wicked thing."

"I should think not," I said, as a vivid picture of Miss Atheling ascending the gallows in a black satin gown rose before me, and made me laugh; but a woman who was in the habit of uttering such threats as those must have been a very unpleasant person to live with, and I no longer wondered at the constantly recurring "poor Miss Hilda."

"And her health got worse and worse, I suppose?" asked Lelgarde.

"Worse and worse; with those hysteric fits, if they was hysteric, and one thing and another, till she had no use of her limbs; though the doctors, and law! she had doctors enough to have killed a whole hospital full, would have it 'twere only nervous suppression!"

"Depression, was not it?"

"Very likely, ma'am, or it might have been both, and a hundred other things as well, I am sure. Nurse could have told you more than I, for she was always with her night and day; and so it went on for nigh fifteen years, and then poor nurse, who had been failing for some time with the heart complaint, she was taken for death, suddenly, in Miss Hilda's very room; and Miss Hilda, she never spoke afterwards, and was dead within the week."

"Thank you; it is a sad story, but I think I ought to know it," said Lelgarde, morally again, as she rose to dismiss the old woman. Mrs. Bracebridge had curtsied herself to the door, when my sister, who had stood fixedly gazing on the picture, turned suddenly towards her.

"You are sure Miss Hilda had quite lost the use of her limbs," she asked, abruptly.

"Oh! entirely, ma'am, she never left her couch for many years."

Lelgarde looked at her dreamily, and passed her hand over her forehead, as if only half awake.

"Then she could not walk about the house? It was impossible, was it?"

"I suppose so, ma'am," said the old woman, evidently surprised.

"Yes," returned Lelgarde, in the same lost, dreamy manner, "Yes, I suppose so; yes, of course it must have been out of the question."

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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XXVIII. MISS ARCHBOLD'S TRUNKS ARRIVE.

THERE is a secret now to be told which must be whispered low, for the winds may not hear that Sir John Archbold, the wealthy, was fast becoming impoverished; that his princely magnificence and hospitality had brought the once overflowing contents of his purse to a low ebb; and that his own extravagance, helped by that of his wife, and especially that of his daughter, now threatened to sweep him to ruin unless some speedy change were effected in the management of his affairs. His pride could not brook confession to the world; the world that had visited at his palace of delight, built up amongst mountains which his will alone had made accessible to man. He had seated luxury on a throne on the very summit of the wilderness; and now the thought of falling from his eyrie, and building himself a lower nest, was like the bitterness of death. Sickening with such bitterness, he had tolerated the wooing of his child by Christopher Lee, for money was great and desirable in his eyes. Katherine, however, had chosen to dismiss Christopher, and she must now be warned of the shallowness of that purse which she had hitherto believed to be deep as the Atlantic. The secret of the decadence of the Camlough wealth was whispered to her fearfully by the now unhappy mother, who had reared her to be selfish and greedy, and without heart. To this mother's whisper there had succeeded a storm; such a tempest had shaken the house of Archbold as had never yet been let loose upon it out of the clouds and caves of the upper mountains. And whilst the storm was raging Sir John took occasion to announce his intention of staying at Camlough all the year, without going to London, as usual, for the season. He would hide himself in his fastnesses on pretence of making improvements, and ponder the means of saving the splendour of his fame. Meanwhile he would only have such visitors as it might please him to invite. Katherine must content herself with simplicity and seclusion, for the gloom of fear had made the father stern towards this daughter, who had almost worn out his affection by the constant display of her selfishness and folly.

Now Katherine's newest whim had been to pay a visit, uninvited, to Monasterlea. Miss Martha was amazed at the young lady's condescension and friendliness, and remarked to Paul that it was quite wonderful to see how some people would turn out well, no matter how the world tried to spoil them. As for that story about Christopher, she had long since thought that the poor girl had been blamed very unfairly. Why should she have been bound to marry Christopher? May had found it very hard to be asked to do so in order to save the young man's fortune, and she had no doubt that Katherine had found it every bit as hard. One could not form a just opinion upon any matter of the kind until one had thought about it a little, and heard both sides of the story. And Aunt Martha, when she saw Katherine's beautiful face in her parlour, asking a welcome with beseeching smiles, thought that she had at last ample evidence that Miss Archbold had been hardly used.

"It proves to me, my dear, that we

ought not to be too hasty," she said to May. "We ought not to blame any one."

"I do not say a word against her," said May. And she doubled up her little fist under her apron with the mighty effort to control her tongue.

These remarks were interchanged in the hall, as Miss Martha, who had stepped out for the express purpose of thus relieving her feelings, met May bearing towards the parlour that antique silver teapot which was the pride of her aunt's heart, followed by Bridget swaying under a tray of good things which might have nourished a small family for a week. May, entering with her teapot, found Paul and Katherine sitting on either side of the hearth, as friendly as possible, and engaged in lively conversation. Katherine was laughing gaily, and Paul was looking very well pleased, seeing that he had succeeded so thoroughly in amusing a pretty and witty woman. The visitor was looking dazzling after her madcap ride—glowing and glittering with all that bewildering light and colour which made her beauty so fascinating. All traces of the half-weird, half-satirical vein of humour which she could show to May, had vanished. Her manner to Paul and Miss Martha was gentle, admiring, winning, and deferential, whilst her brilliant chatter brimmed with wit, and her readiness to be amused was surprising and delightful. May was scarcely suffered to add a mite to the conversation, for Katherine had a trick of stealing the words from her mouth before they were spoken, and of gracefully throwing ridicule over every remark which she permitted her to make. Yet this was done so cleverly, that nobody but May felt its meaning or its persistency.

May bore it patiently and with good humour. Here, in Paul's presence, the superstitious sense of uneasiness could not touch her. She was thoroughly satisfied with Paul's love for herself, and did not fear for a moment that any man or woman could destroy or even weaken their mutual tenderness and trust. So she laughed with Katherine at every jest that was turned against herself, and submitted to play the simpleton with a very lovely grace. The little parlour rang with merriment that evening. Katherine mimicked everybody, visitors, servants, peasants, and aristocrats, giving vivid pictures of various phases of life. It was only when the play was played out, and her voice hushed for the night, that one might remember, in the quietness which succeeded, the vein of unmerciful harshness and contempt which had run through her representations of human nature.

The next morning Paul came to breakfast, and May, as was usual on such occasions, went tripping over the snow to meet him. Paul's high spirits still endured. He had not had a fit of gloom since he had become agent to the miser. Naturally the conversation turned upon Katherine.

"She is a beautiful creature," said Paul.

"She is very beautiful," said May.

"And friendly," said Paul. "She remembers quite freshly every circumstance of my former acquaintance with her. There was so little of it one would think she might have forgotten. With all her flatterers and admirers, of whom we have heard so much, one would hardly expect that she could have a lively recollection of an insignificant fellow like me."

"Paul," said May, with a sudden and passionate impulse, "don't let her push me out of your heart. Little and poor as I am I can be more to you than she could be."

"My darling," said Paul, surprised, "you might as well ask me with that wistful face not to give myself over to the Evil One. You will not let me stray away from you? This little hand, though small, will hold me."

"I do not know that," said May. "If I saw you willing to go I don't think I could bring myself to hold you."

"You could," said Paul, "and it would be as much your duty as if you were already my wedded wife. No marriage vow can bind us to each other more solemnly than we are bound. But of one thing be certain; my heart has no room to spare for any woman besides yourself. Miss Archbold is beautiful and charming in a wonderful degree, but she is the last woman in the world whom I could associate with a thought of tenderness. You had much better be jealous of your good Aunt Martha."

"I used to think that I could not be jealous," said May, "but now I fear that I could, if it were not that I so utterly hate and despise the feeling."

"Hate and despise it more," said Paul, "though that is scarcely worth your while, for I swear to you that provocation shall never come in your way. We want one another my love, and divided we could not thrive. I, at least, want you. Anything that parted us would be the sure and complete ruin of Paul Finiston. Then, indeed, would the curse have its will of me.

I should go down to destruction just as certainly as any Finiston of them all."

"You must not think that," said May; but instinctively she tightened her hold upon his arm.

May was used to this kind of talk, and she had ceased to be frightened at it. She believed very earnestly in the mystery of the Finistons, and the idea was a rapture to her that she was thus strong in her weakness to be a safeguard to Paul. Yet on this special morning there was something that pressed on her with a vague fear of danger; and somehow, despise it as she would, the uneasiness was associated with Katherine. The thought of jealousy was indeed a folly to her, and it was not now jealousy that she felt. The fear was not of sorrow nor of disappointment for herself, but of harm for Paul, through whom alone she could be made to suffer. She had no separate interests, no selfish feelings to be hurt, no pride to be wounded, no vanity to be stung. She felt herself indeed a part of Paul. There was something in the idea of the possibility of their being separated, as put forth by him at this moment, whilst her own mind was troubled, that struck her with unusual sharpness; as if, indeed, there had been some invisible and unholy power, whose strength was pitted against them, and who would strive to tear them asunder. In the deathly quiet of the winter morning they stood still upon the road, and looked in each other's faces. The Woods of Tobereevil lay in gaunt masses before their eyes, frowning out of a ragged shroud of snow. In the snow-time the old legend always seemed more real than at any other moment, and there was always a ghastliness upon the country while the white sheeting covered the wicked trees and their roots. The "awful babe of death," and his frozen mother, seemed to lie stark and stiff under every snow-wreath; and it was easy to imagine that the feeble shred of smoke from one chimney of the mansion ascended at that moment from the blighted hearth-place of the first Paul Finiston. May locked her hands together upon Paul's supporting arm, and her eyes flashed defiance at the ranks of the wicked woods.

"I tell you," she said, as the flame softened in her eyes, when they met Paul's gaze, "be they men, women, or demons, they shall tear me in little pieces before I loose my hold of you!"

After that the mood of both changed, and they returned to Monasterlea as merry as two children. Katherine had not all the wit to herself at the breakfast-table, for May's tongue was so loosened by joy that it did clever work just as prettily as any innocent tongue that ever yet sent music out of a woman's smiling mouth.

After breakfast Bridget announced that a travelling-carriage was on its way down the road to Monasterlea. Aunt Martha vanished to put on her afternoon cap, Katherine was in her room, and May received Lady Archbold in the cottage parlour.

"My daughter is here?" she said eagerly, looking in May's face.

"Yes," said May, "since yesterday in the evening."

Lady Archbold was relieved. Her child at least was safe. But now that her fears were allayed, the uneasiness that she had suffered showed itself in irritation and anger.

"You should not have taken her in; you ought not to have kept her here," she said. "Why did not your aunt send her home to me at once?"

"We never thought of such a thing. We could not have done it. The night was wild; and think of the distance!"

Lady Archbold moaned a little, and wrung her hands slowly as she held down the storm of her indignation. She looked up with her feverish glance and saw a sympathy in May's eyes which invited her to speak.

"Katherine is not good to me," she said; "Katherine is not good to me. Now, promise me that you will never repeat this to any one in the world."

"I promise," said May; "but, Lady Archbold, don't be hard upon her. You have spoiled her a little, I dare say." And May took part with Katherine in pity to the poor mother who was blaming her.

"Ah, that is it, but she might at least remember that it was our love for her that did it. I would give the heart out of my bosom if only she would love me, and be a little tender with her mother. Look at me, young girl! I was as proud as the very eagles in the mountains, and yet love for her has brought me to this, that I am whimpering here to you like the beggar that comes to your gate. I reared her, and fashioned her to be a fit wife for a prince, but I would give her cheerfully to the poorest gentleman that ever yet loved her, and portion her with every penny and jewel I possess, if she would only show me one warm spot in her breast where I might live and find comfort for the remainder of my days.

But, oh me! how she wounds this poor aching heart!"

"She does not mean it," said May, still pleading for the mother's heart rather than for the daughter. "She will be sorry when you talk to her. She is wilful and impulsive, but she will be wiser by-and-bye."

"Ah, you do not know her. By-and-bye I shall grow as cold and indifferent as she is. I shall be harsh with her, for she will have turned all my love into bitterness. But she will soon be freed from me, for I shall die. In the mean time, I came here to bring her back with me to Camlough."

"I am afraid she will not go," said May, knowing that Katherine had a great mind to stay at Monasterlea.

"Ah, will not go!" panted Lady Archbold. "Perhaps, Miss Mourne, you sympathise with her in this. Perhaps you wish to keep her against my will. You will repent it if you do. Mind, I say to you, you shall repent it!"

"I do not sympathise with her," said May, "nor wish to keep her here. But if she insists on staying we cannot drive her away."

"But you ought to drive her away," flashed forth Lady Archbold, whose passion rose against opposition. "You have a lover, I am told, and you had better look to it. You will not stand beside my Katherine. If you persist in keeping her by you, your lover will not be your lover many days. She will delight in taking him from you; in breaking both his heart and yours."

May grew a little pale at the coarse way in which so sacred a subject was handled.

"I don't think that will be in her power," she said.

"You think so, do you? Well, I have warned you to keep watch over your property."

"Lady Archbold," said May, "you do not understand me. I shall neither watch nor fear."

"You are a fool," said Lady Archbold, "a great fool, but an honest one. Oh me! oh me! Will not my child come to speak to me?"

"She does not know you are here," said May. "I will go at once and send her to you." And she hurried away, leaving the mother rocking herself sorrowfully in her chair, and making again that slow wringing movement with her hands, as if she would force back the tide of bitterness that was always seething in her breast.

May went and knocked at Katherine's door.

"Lady Archbold is here, and wants to see you."

"Lady Archbold already! Nonsense. Well, we must allow that the old lady has been pretty active. I shall go to her presently, when I have finished dressing my hair. I wonder what she has come for."

"She hopes you will return with her," said May.

"Then her hopes are vain, my dear, for you are not going to get rid of me so quickly. Your good Aunt Martha has invited me to stay here as long as it suits my humour; and it very much suits my humour to take advantage of her kindness. So you may tell Lady Archbold, without waiting till I am ready, that she can trot the fat horses back to Camlough when she likes." And Katherine swept a glittering braid upward as she spoke, and added its weight to the golden coronet which she was building up on her head.

"I cannot take that message," said May. "I should go to her at once if I were you."

"But you are not me," said Katherine, with complacency, and she surveyed May all over with a slight sweeping glance, and with a faint smile upon her lip, as if to say, "How audacious to suggest such a comparison!" "However, I will go to her now, and I will beg of you to have my trunks carried here in the mean time."

"I believe there are no trunks," said May; "I have not seen any."

"No trunks!" cried Katherine, and her brows lowered, and an expression of rude anger gloomed out and extinguished the beauty in her face. "I think Lady Archbold would not come here without the trunks."

But evidently she admitted the idea that the trunks had not been brought, for her face did not brighten as she took her way to the parlour.

The door was closed upon mother and daughter. By-and-bye sounds were heard from the room; echoes of voices speaking in high-pitched tones, vibrating with passion. Afterwards there was silence, and then low murmurs and sobbing. Aunt Martha came creeping softly into her niece's room.

"May, this is dreadful! That harsh, haughty woman will break the bright young creature's heart. Only to hear the poor child sobbing through the wall!"

"Are you sure it is she who is sobbing?" asked May.

"My dear, come into the store-room,

and believe your own eyes. I have been there making some custard, and it is all curdled with the excitement."

"Well, Aunty, the poor lady was in great trouble when I left her, and she only wants her daughter to go home."

"Home, indeed! Don't tell me. Does a girl run away from home when she is treated there with gentleness? Did you ever run away from here? Just answer me that! A proud, hard woman, not fit to bring up a daughter."

"If the mother wants to take her, I don't see how you can keep her."

"But I will keep her; that is, if she is anxious to stay with me. Let the mother go home and cool her temper a little. The girl has asked me for shelter, and I promise you she shall get it."

As Miss Martha spoke the parlour door opened violently, and Lady Archbold made her way rapidly down the garden path to her carriage. Miss Martha thanked Heaven, and went back to her store-room, and May met Katherine returning to her chamber. There were two red spots on the young lady's cheeks; but her eyes were dry and bright. It was not she who had wept so piteously as to spoil Miss Martha's custard. The eyes that had shed the tears were still weeping themselves blind as they were hurried along through the snow back to Camlough.

The next day Katherine's trunks did actually arrive; laden with the costly and beautiful raiment in which Miss Archbold loved to deck herself. Miss Martha marvelled not a little when she saw their number and proportions; and Bridget's head was completely turned for a whole week by the visions of grandeur which dazzled her eyes whilst she was engaged in making up Miss Archbold's room.

THOMAS BUSBY, MUS. DOC.

THERE is a story of a country clergyman observing of Rejected Addresses, that he could not understand why they had been rejected; they seemed to him very good addresses. And a certain critic of the period is reputed to have said of Gulliver's Travels that he thought the narrative interesting, but rather improbable in regard to some of its details. It is plain that, in the judgment of many lookers-on, satire must often miss its mark. Indeed, when it is of a comprehensive kind, one can no more expect that its every shaft will tell, than that every shot fired from a mitrailleuse will cause destruction. In both cases some waste of force, and some failure of plan, are almost inevitable.

A great satirist invests with importance the objects of his satire. However severe may be his usage of them, he yet kicks them up-stairs as it were. Pope has really embalmed in the Dunciad the poetasters and witlings he sought to exterminate. But for him we should know nothing of them. In lieu of the vitriol that destroys, he poured upon them, in truth, the spirits of wine that preserve. Fame clings to them from the fact that they were deemed worthy the furious attack of one so famous.

James and Horace Smith were not satirists of the Pope school. Avowedly they designed but to raise "a harmless laugh" at the expense of the more eminent and popular writers of their time. Some of these even—Rogers and Campbell for instance—were passed over from a feeling that they did not present sufficient opportunities to the caricaturists. And throughout their undertaking the joint authors were intent upon producing inoffensive parodies rather than acrimonious satire. As a rule, therefore, we must not look in their pages for the kind of ridicule that confers long life upon its victims. Something like this has happened, however, in two or three cases. Effusive Fitzgerald and his benedictory verses would perhaps long since have been forgotten but for the burlesque of his muse by the Smiths. The Honourable William Spencer's name as a poet would scarcely have survived if the humorous travestie of his style and sentiments, commencing with the line "Sobriety cease to be sober," had not been written. Spencer himself, "in comic confidence at his villa at Petersham," said to Horace Smith: "It's all very well for once, but don't do it again. I had been almost forgotten when you revived me; and now all the newspapers and reviews ring with 'this fashionable and trashy author.'" And a third bard, mainly remembered now by the parody of his verses in Rejected Addresses, was a certain Thomas Busby, Mus. Doc., concerning whom we propose to make some brief mention.

The arrow sped at Doctor Busby was the one failure of the satirists. He could thereafter claim fame both on the score that he had been thought worth aiming at, and that he had been missed. But he was in truth too vast and too dense a butt. He had already clothed himself so completely in ridicule, that there was no room for any one to add more. What can the satirist

do against a man who has more than sufficiently satirised himself? The doctor's own writings, as the Quarterly Review remarked at the time, "for extravagant folly, tumid meanness, and vulgar affectation, set all the powers of parody at utter defiance." Jeffrey, in the Edinburgh, said of the address, Architectural Atoms, which the Smiths had ascribed to Busby, that it appeared to be "far more capable of combining into good poetry than the few lines we were able to read of the learned doctor's genuine address." Did ever satirists before over estimate the merits of their subject, or parody so mildly as to raise less laughter than the thing parodied?

Yet this Busby, apart from his distinction as a butt, was a person of some note in his day. Absurd almost to craziness, he yet had fair title to respect on the score of his abilities and accomplishments. Born at Westminster, in 1755, he had studied music under Jonathan Battishill, at that time a famous composer of anthems, catches, and glees, who lies buried by the side of Doctor Boyce, in St. Paul's Cathedral. Busby became organist at the churches of St. Mary Woolnoth, Lombard-street, and St. Mary, Newington; produced oratorios at the Haymarket and Covent Garden Theatres; published selections of music in a serial form, such as the Divine Harmonist and the Beauties of British Song. In 1800 the University of Cambridge conferred upon him his degree of Doctor of Music. He supplied the accompaniments to the popular melodramas of a Tale of Mystery and Rugantino, and the music of the opera of the Fair Fugitives. He published a grammar of music and a new musical dictionary. Moreover, he produced a translation of Lucretius, which was thus cruelly announced by one of the newspapers in the register of births: "Yesterday, at his house in Queen Anne-street, Doctor Busby of a still-born Lucretius."

It was the doctor's delusion that he was a poet. He was continually pestering the newspapers with his effusions. He especially prided himself upon his prologues and occasional addresses to theatrical audiences. Elliston, who had become manager of the Surrey Theatre, humoured the doctor's foible, enlisted his services, and designated him "the laureate of the Surrey stage." In evasion or in defiance of the restrictions of the licenser and the privileges of the patent theatres, Elliston had produced Macbeth as "a grand ballet of action with music, &c." He was only entitled to perform "burlettas," but he contrived to embrace the whole British drama in that mysterious form of entertainment. Doctor Busby provided a prologue to this ballet of Macbeth. It was a curious composition, which reciting that "with nature and the energies of man, the reign of poesy and song began," enumerated all the great dramatists from Æschylus to Shakespeare, and concluded with a reference to the peculiar difficulties of the Surrey management:

> Though not endowed with fullest powers of speech,
> The poet's object we aspire to reach;
> The emphatic gesture, eloquence of eye,
> Scenes, music, every energy we try,
> To prove we keep our duties full in view,
> And what we must not say resolved to do;
> Convinced that you will deem our zeal sincere,
> Since more by deeds than words it will appear.

Many other addresses were afterwards written by Busby for Elliston; the great manager and his proceedings supplying sufficient themes for the poet. "They contributed to each other's fame," writes a critic; "it was a joint policy of immortality;" and it was noted at the time that although Kean was the first actor who talked of "his secretary," Elliston was the first manager who for his own greater glorification specially retained the services of a bard.

Occasionally it would seem, however, that Elliston, unable to commit to memory the rhapsodies of Busby, or preferring his own impromptu ingenuity as a speech-maker, would pause in the middle of the doctor's address, and conclude with an oration of his own contriving. Something of this kind happened at the opening of the Surrey in 1810. The first poetry lines of the managerial address were Busby's, but presently Elliston was found to be delivering in his happiest manner his own florid prose. "The poetry was conventional, the speech was special," writes Elliston's biographer, "and though the unhappy rhymester was sadly shorn on the evening in question, he had the satisfaction of viewing himself at full length in the newspaper columns of the following morning."

When the committee of management of Drury Lane Theatre publicly advertised in August, 1812, for an address to be spoken on the opening of the new building on the 10th of October, be sure that Doctor Busby availed himself of the opportunity to exercise his muse. It does not appear from the terms of the advertisement that any reward was offered for the most successful poem. But no doubt an understanding prevailed that the chosen bard would be duly recompensed. Nearly a gross of addresses was sent in, each in obedience to the pro-

visions of the invitation, "sealed up, with a distinguishing word, number, or motto, corresponding with the inscription on a separate sealed paper containing the name of the author." These addresses, "some written by men of great, some by men of little, and some by men of no talent," were all rejected. At the last moment a prologue was supplied by Lord Byron, a member of the committee. Probably it had been from the first intended that his lordship should be the poet of the occasion.

Of the numerous discarded bards, Doctor Busby was the most angry and disappointed. Fully convinced of its surpassing merits, he had made sure of his address being chosen before all others. Moreover, as though expressly to aggravate the sufferings of the poets, no intimation had been afforded them of the fate of their manuscripts. It is even probable that many of them had attended the theatre on the opening night in expectation of hearing their own verses delivered from the stage. The rejected candidates might surely have been spared this mortification. And the managers would have saved themselves from considerable inconvenience if they had been more alert to consult the feelings of the slighted authors. Lord Byron's address was recited by Elliston, in the dress of Hamlet, on the opening night, and was repeated after the first play on nine or ten subsequent evenings. There was a murmuring in the air and a leaven of discontent among the audience, but there would seem to have been no serious manifestation of feeling until the night of the 14th of October, when, immediately after the performance of the Hypocrite had concluded, an unknown gentleman rose in the pit and addressed the audience with great earnestness. One of the actors appeared upon the stage in accordance with the custom of that time, to announce the entertainments of the following evening. He was compelled to retire, having failed to make himself heard. The attention of the audience was engrossed by the speaker in the pit, and great confusion prevailed. The gentleman was waving a paper in his hand, and was therefore invited by his neighbours to mount to the stage and address the house from that advantageous position. This counsel the unknown followed; when in front of the footlights he was met by Mr. Raymond, the stage-manager. Both addressed the house and each other, without either making himself heard. The spectators laughed, cheered, and then hooted. Meantime, the figures upon the stage were seen gesticulating and interchanging profound bows, after the manner of Noodle and Doodle in the burlesque of Tom Thumb. Eventually the stranger was somewhat violently removed from the stage by two police officers. This arbitrary proceeding excited great disapprobation. The concluding performances of the night were subjected to grave interruption. The stage-manager was summoned and was loudly hissed upon his entry. He endeavoured to explain that he had only acted in accordance with the duties of his office; he had but removed "an unknown person," who had attempted to disturb the representation, and he appealed to the house to know if it was regular or desirable that any one should quit the pit and appear on the stage to recite an unauthorised address. A measure of peace was restored, but Mr. Raymond left many of his auditors unconvinced of the propriety of his treatment of the "unknown person," who remains unknown to this day.

A more stormy episode was in store for the following evening relative to a rejected address. The entertainments consisted of the Rivals and the farce of Turn Out. Upon the termination of the comedy, Doctor Busby rose from his seat in the boxes, and, bowing repeatedly to all parts of the house, commenced a speech. For some minutes the tumult was so great, friends and foes were alike so vociferous, hisses and plandits were so intermingled, that not a sentence could be heard. By his more immediate neighbours, however, the speaker was understood to say:

"I am Doctor Busby: a lover, a member of the drama, and a friend to the theatre." (Loud cheering, hisses, and cries of "Hear him!"). "Ladies and gentlemen, by some I may be blamed for taking this method of addressing you, as being humiliating to a gentleman, but I can see no greater impropriety in speaking from the public box of a public theatre than from a forum, or from the hustings of an election." (Cheering and disapprobation.) "Ladies and gentlemen, for the talents and qualifications of the right honourable, noble, and illustrious lord who wrote the address which you have heard this night recited to you I have the highest respect." (Applause and hisses.) "It is well known that for several weeks the committee appointed to manage the concerns of this theatre have, by public advertisements, courted the exertions of the literary world to prepare an address to be spoken at the opening of this truly magnificent structure. This was, on their part,

noble and praiseworthy, but it must be allowed on all hands that, however right they have been in intention, they have most lamentably erred in judgment."

The noise now became so great that the doctor was unable to proceed for some minutes. Presently he went on to say that the number of persons who condescended to furnish addresses had exceeded one hundred, he believed, and those who thought that out of such a number a better could not have been selected, did not think so highly of the poetical talent of the country as he did. Among them it might be taken for granted that some were very fine. He himself knew of four or five answering to that description. Here arose loud cries of "Your own and your son's were among the number."

The orchestra now commenced playing, and drowned in music the voice of the speaker. Presently he was further interrupted by the performance of the farce. Between the acts he made an unsuccessful attempt to renew his speech. The audience were divided in opinion. Some were for hearing the doctor, some for hearing the farce. The actors ventured upon appropriate "gags." Dowton, who played Restive, charged against a misjudging world "which had rejected many of his works of genius, that he had sent twenty most noble addresses to Drury Lane Theatre, none of which had been accepted by the committee. He had, therefore, determined to go to the playhouse himself and recite them." This sally was received with great laughter and applause. And a verse of the song of Turn Out, sung by Knight, in the character of Forage, also excited great amusement:

> Poor poets must often turn out, turn out,
> Poor poets must often turn out,
> And though often they wait,
> Expecting their fate,
> They discover, too late,
> Like the rest they must quickly turn out.

But the doctor was not to be dismayed or silenced. The farce over, he again presented himself to the audience. "I have a strong, a powerful motive," he said, "for requesting your attention. I am a friend to this theatre. I wish to open the way to super-excellence, to bring forward strong and powerful talent instead of letting it sink into oblivion. Gentlemen, I am a friend to merit, and more especially to modest merit. My son is now in this house with an address which I had prepared for the opening of the theatre, and nothing would bring greater pride and satisfaction to me than that he should be allowed by the managers to rehearse it on the stage, if you will give him leave."

This proposition was greeted with prolonged applause. But suddenly the speaker was roughly seized by two Bow-street officers, and dragged from the boxes. The doctor fought gallantly, and by sitting down on the stairs and grasping the banisters with all his force, he greatly hindered the efforts of the constables. A crowd was collected and chivalrously took the part of the oppressed. The officers were hustled down the stairs, while their victim was borne in triumph upon the shoulders of his friends round the corridors, and reinstated in the boxes. Smoothing his ruffled plumage, and gaining breath while the house cheered him again and again, the doctor resumed his speech. He was understood to state that he was now the champion of the rights of playgoers, as much a freeman as a conqueror, and he should now give the house an opportunity of hearing such a monologue as they had seldom heard. (Cries of "Bravo!" and "Go on!") He acknowledged their kind partiality with more than common gratitude, for more than common compliment to his muse; but he had now to mention that if they were as sincere as he was in their desire to hear his verses, they must hear them from his son, who was sitting in the pit, and who knew the monologue by heart.

Mr. George Frederick Busby, the doctor's son, now mounted to the stage. At the same moment Mr. Raymond reappeared. In obedience to the wish of the house he soon withdrew however, intimating that the management had no wish to interfere with the efforts of the reciter. Mr. Busby, junior, then began the address. But his voice was small, and the uproar was still great. With difficulty could the opening lines be heard:

> When energising objects men pursue
> What are the prodigies they cannot do?
> A magic edifice you here survey,
> Shot from the ruins of the other day.

Then came interruptions, hisses, cries of "Silence!" and laughter. The speaker was inaudible, but he persisted with his task. Thereupon he was in his turn addressed by a loud-toned gentleman in the boxes. "Mr. Busby, I would advise you to go home if you cannot make use of a stronger voice. You ought not to presume to get on that stage to detain the company if you cannot speak so that we may distinctly hear, and I must tell you that not a word of what you say can be understood here from the smallness of your voice, however large and elegant your ideas may be."

The young gentleman claimed further indulgence, and for some little time longer he was permitted to proceed with his monologue. But still he could not make himself heard. The house now took to groaning and crying "Go home!" At length he desisted, and retired from the stage, leaving his address still in part unheard. So terminated a scene that was wonderfully absurd, and must have been also irresistibly laughable.

The doctor published his address in the newspapers. He was not to be convinced of its inferiority. At his own house he gave private recitations of it, with readings from his translation of Lucretius, refreshing his audience with tea and bread-and-butter. Satire was powerless against such a poet. The Smiths' parody fell flat. Even the Parenthetical Address, by "Doctor Plagiary," which Lord Byron hastened to publish, was felt as somewhat superfluous, a thrice slaying of the slain. The opening lines ran thus:

> "When energising objects men pursue,"
> The Lord knows what is writ by Lord knows who.
> "A modest monologue you here survey,"
> Hissed from the theatre "the other day,"
> As if Sir Fretful wrote the "slumberous" verse,
> And gave his son "the rubbish" to rehearse.

The address was directed to be spoken "in an inarticulate voice by Master P. at the opening of the next new theatre. Stolen parts marked with inverted commas." But it was hardly worth while to accuse the doctor of plagiarism, or to consider him with any degree of gravity. He was not a foeman worthy of Lord Byron's steel, or of any one's steel, or, indeed, of steel at all employed aggressively. He could be safely trusted to make himself more than sufficiently ridiculous.

A CORNISH CARNIVAL.

A PROPER combination of business with pleasure, so as to enjoy a sufficiency of the latter while persuading oneself that one is duly discharging the former, so as to find oneself strongly impelled by duty to proceed to certain places, where, on those particular occasions, there happen to be more than ordinary attractions, though difficult of achievement, amply repays one for the pains and labour it entails. I speak with authority on this subject, because my position, as Commissioner of Drafts and Dockets, has given me a certain amount of experience. It has been my fate to be on duty in the neighbourhood of Epsom in the last days of May, and after a fortnight's interval, to be compelled to proceed as far as Ascot. I have a recollection of attempting to console myself for having to work during Easter week, by finding that the scene of my operations lay in the Isle of Wight, and of mitigating the severity of my autumnal labours, by choosing that period of the year for the inspection of the drafts and dockets in connexion with the English Lakes. But on consideration, I am disposed to think that I never so effectively combined business with pleasure, as during the three spring months of last year, which I passed in Devonshire and Cornwall, a result mainly owing to the suggestive guidance of Mr. Cumberland.

A pleasant man, Mr. Cumberland, but not without his peculiarities; the most noticeable of these being his inability to arrive at a railway station until just as the train by which he is going is about to start; his inability to remember anybody's name, and a consequent habit of calling everybody "Mr.—Um;" and a most singular knowledge of outlying corners in all sorts of localities—city streets, country roads, and barren moors—where liquid refreshment, always phrased by him as a "glass of bitter," is procurable.

Travelling here and there in the extreme west, looking after the well-being of the drafts and dockets, I was continually coming across Mr. Cumberland, and was immensely puzzled as to the nature of his occupation. Sometimes I would see him alight at a station, spring into an open trap which was waiting for him, and be whirled away by prancing steeds. At other times he would jump out at a little bit of a platform, and go clumping up a badly-made road, in company of a gentleman evidently of the navvy persuasion. I have seen him swathed in thick leather from his hips to his heels, with an oil-skin dreadnought on his back, and a fan-tailed hat on his head, and a short black pipe in his mouth, and I have beheld him radiant in blue broadcloth and white waistcoat, and low-crowned curly-brimmed hat, of the celebrated Champagne Charley pattern, perched rakishly on his head, while he languidly puffed an odoriferous cigar. He was known to all the station-masters and guards on the line, with whom he held muttered conferences about spare timber-trucks, and taking this in conjunction with the fact that I once met him riding, with great difficulty, a very obstinate looking pony, in the midst of a thick wood, and pointing out what

he mentioned as "likely lots" to his companion, I imagined him to be a timber merchant. But the very next day, encountering him in the train, bearing in his hand a shining wooden box, which looked as if it contained an accordion, and noticing that whenever the train stopped at a station mysterious-looking men with their fustian trousers strapped up round their knees, and with acres of red clay upon their heavy boots, came up and held whispered communication with him, I changed my idea, and finally discovered that he was a superior employé in the out-door service of the Telegraph Department, clear-headed, active, and intelligent, as that service demands. Let me try to recal one of those pleasant trips, undertaken in Mr. Cumberland's company, amongst the great barren moors, green headlands, red cliffs, and shining blue seas, in the lovely West of England.

It is eight o'clock on a bright morning in the early days of May, and I am seated in the Cornwall train under the wretched shed which does duty for a terminal station at Plymouth. The engine has its steam up, the guards are rushing to and fro, slamming the doors, and I am becoming very anxious about Mr. Cumberland, when that worthy slips into the station and takes his seat beside me just as the wheels begin to revolve. Business enters but little into our projects for this day, at least so far as I am concerned, though I notice that throughout our progress, wherever a telegraph wire or post is to be seen, Mr. Cumberland's quick eye is roving in their direction, and from time to time he makes little entries in his note-book. We are bound for the little Cornish town of Helston, where, from time immemorial, high festival has been held on the 8th of May, and quaint old rites performed, at the celebration of which we have determined to be present. We have, however, rather a long journey to make, and our way lies through some of the most beautiful and interesting portions of the county. Past Devonport, where our third-class is boarded by a number of soldiers and sailors, some holiday-making, some changing their stations, and where we get a fine view of the Hamoaze, where lie, rotting and useless, and representing many hundreds of thousands of pounds, some fifty of the wooden walls of Old England, many of which were being built when the iron walls of Old England suddenly came into fashion, and consequently have never been finished, never rigged, manned, or officered, and have known no other water than that mixture of fresh Tamar and salt sea, which forms the Hamoaze anchorage. Now through the Saltash viaduct (which, crossing the Tamar, carries the railway, at a height of one hundred feet above the water, from the hills of Devon to the hills of Cornwall, which is three hundred feet longer than the far-famed Britannia Tube, and pleasanter, in the fact that its sides are open, giving one a view of the broad winding river, and the lovely scenery on its banks); past Saltash village, straggling up the cliff, with its irregular succession of fishermen's whitewashed cottages, reaching from the shore below to the railway above; now thundering over the dangerous-looking wooden viaducts, which are so numerous on this line, past St. Germans, erst the home of Sir John Eliot, Hampden's friend, and the subject of Mr. Forster's admirable biography, past Menheniot, where we get the first sound of a true Cornish name, and so on to Liskeard. We have no chance now for a divergence to Looe, prettiest and quaintest of unspoiled seaside villages, where the fishers dwell in their primitive simplicity, even though on the way we should be enabled to visit the Well of St. Keyne, the miraculous powers of whose waters in awarding supremacy in conjugal disputes are celebrated in Southey's well-known ballad. No time to stop at Doublebois (a name which, pronounced by the porters "Double boys," brings pathetic reminiscences to the parents of male twins); no time to catch more than a fleeting glimpse of the lovely tower and spire of Lostwithiel Church—unique in its beauty, or of the broad sands and breaking waves just visible as we flit by Par; no time to visit the Fowey Consolidated Mines, whose enormous works rear their great cross-trees within our sight, and whose "tickets-ings" are quoted weekly in the London journals. Villa residences dotted here and there, so different in their smug gentility from the grand old country seats which we have occasionally seen in the distance on our route, proclaim our approach to the outskirts of a large town, and soon we see lying beneath us the church-tower and the handsome public buildings, and the hilly streets of Truro. Here we leave our carriage, which proceeds to Penzance, and enter another train bound for Falmouth. In it, however, we go no further than the next station, Penryn, where Mr. Cumberland bids me alight, disappearing

himself immediately afterwards, as he mutters something relative to a "glass of bitter."

At the little Penryn station there are several conveyances, public and private, for the transport of passengers to Helston, which is some seven miles off; farmers' gigs, roomy, rumbling vehicles, never now seen in more civilized places, a smart dog-cart, into which jump two well-dressed, good-looking young men, who have been the subjects of much salutation from the bystanders, and a stage-coach with three horses harnessed unicorn fashion, on which we take our seats. "Davey's" coach is well known in these parts, and has always a fair complement of passengers, but to-day its load is excessive. I on the seat behind the driver and between Mr. Cumberland and a youth who has a day's holiday from his private tutor, and who takes care to let us know the fact, as though it gave him dignity and status. He is smoking a very nasty cigar, and delighting in the conversation of the passenger on the other side of him, a recruiting sergeant of dragoons, a bumptious, swaggering varlet, with his hair flattened with grease to his head, and his great coarse moustache waxed and lacquered. He is an Irishman, but tries desperately hard to disguise his brogue, and the stories of experiences in life which he pours into the ear of the silly boy so eagerly listening to them, were not of the "battles, sieges, fortunes, he had passed," but of the delights of dissipation in Knightsbridge Music Hall and Aldershot canteens, and Portsmouth dancing-houses. He has but a poor opinion of the service in which he is engaged, and speaks of it disparagingly, but he leers horribly as he mentions the fascination which the uniform has for women, and the vicious laziness of his life. He has, it appears, great hopes of ensnaring some of the bumpkins who will be present at the Helston festivities; probably his expectations are not ill-founded, as the country people, who are our fellow-passengers, are perpetually staring at this blustering hero with evident wonder and admiration.

This military gasconade is not commenced until we have reached the foot of the steep and winding hill, in driving his horses down which the hard-featured coachman had to exercise no little skill and caution (indeed, during the descent I noticed the hero clinging very tightly to the iron rail against which he sat), and by the time we reached the opposite eminence, whence we have a long level stretch into the heart of the country, I am too much occupied with the lovely view of Falmouth harbour, lying as it were immediately below us, to pay any further attention to the ill-timed chatter. Mr. Cumberland, who, as he himself says, "has poled and wired every mile of the county," is an excellent guide, pointing out every interesting place, and being admirably stocked with local stories and traditions. From him I learn that, according to the popular legend, Helston owes its name to a huge block of granite, which was less than a century ago to be seen in the court-yard at the Angel Inn, but which about that time was broken up and used as part of the building material of the assembly-room then erected. This stone the country folk believe originally lay at the mouth of hell, whence it was one day carried away by the devil, who intended to put it to some diabolical use. But as his satanic majesty was crossing the county of Cornwall, he was encountered by St. Michael, the guardian saint of the town. A fight ensued, in which the devil being defeated, took to his heels or wings, and dropped the hell-stone in his flight. In commemoration of this event the inhabitants instituted the festival at which we are about to assist, the Floral, or Furry Day, which, whatever its origin, has undoubtedly, from time immemorial, been held on the 8th of May. With edifying gravity Mr. Cumberland requests me on no account to let it be known to any of the inhabitants that our visit has relation to business of any kind, inasmuch that, according to custom, any person who can be detected at work on Furry Day is instantly seized and carried astride upon a pole to the river, into which, if he does not buy his release at a pretty liberal price, he is forthwith flung. Indeed, according to Mr. Cumberland, the pleasure indulged in by the Helstonians is in itself quite enough labour for that day at least. The fun commences at nine o'clock, when they assemble at the grammar school and demand their prescriptive holiday. Then, a general subscription having been made to defray the expenses, they proceed into the fields and woods, whence they return laden with armfuls of flowers and branches of trees. "What do they do then?" I ask, but Mr. Cumberland, laughingly declines to state. I must see that with my own eyes, he says, and he will not by any description anticipate my amusement. Besides, even

if he agrees to tell me, there is no time, as we are there.

Garlands of flowers festooned across the road, flags flying from nearly every window, shops all closed, main street so crammed with folks in holiday clothes, that it is with great difficulty we can get up to the Angel door, bells ringing, general glee, happiness, and perspiration—these are what I find at Helston. The last item is, I notice, most profuse in a certain number of people of both sexes, and of all ages, who are the recipients of great attention from their fellow townspeople. I am about to inquire what these worthies may have been doing, but all I can see of Mr. Cumberland is the end of his coat-skirt vanishing into the Angel, where, following in hot pursuit, I find him perfectly at home. The hall and passages are crammed, the coffee-room and commercial-room are overflowing, thirsty men, clamorous for liquor, are wedged on the stairs, or clinging like bees to the balustrades; but Mr. Cumberland has calmly made his way to the inner bar, and there is seated, smiling and happy, with a "glass of bitter" by his side. He knows Mrs. Bennett, of course (what tourist wandering through the Lizard district does not know and respect that queen of old-fashioned landladies, in whose hotel the acme of cleanliness and comfort is to be found?); he knows the four or five bouncing, cherry-cheeked waitresses in their clean gowns and smart caps, who laugh and say "La, now!" as he addresses them each by their christian name; he knows a commercial who travels in cider and another who travels in hides; he has a pleasant word for every one, and makes himself so agreeable that he manages to find a place for me by his side without evoking any discontent.

I am in the midst of my luncheon, when I hear a few notes played by a band outside, and one of the extremely warm gentlemen whom I had previously noticed, a little man in spectacles, with damp whiskers and shirt-collar, rushes into the bar, calling out, "Second round! Take your partners, we are starting for the second round." At this invitation everybody jumps up with alacrity, and rushes into the outer court, where, following them, I find the volunteer band, whose music I had previously heard. Looking at the band it strikes me that I am not the only person who has been lunching. There is a redness in the faces of its members, and a wild vigour in their style of playing, which are, to say the least of them, curious. Notably eccentric is the drummer, who, round his volunteer uniform cap, had twined an enormous wreath of flowers, which hangs gracefully over his face, thus rendering him a pleasing combination of Mars and Flora.

As soon as the notes of the "Furry" tune (a well-known Cornish air heard constantly throughout the county, and to be found in Mr. Chappell's collection of Ancient English Melodies) are heard, the bystanders gravely take their partners, and commence dancing a step, which is half jig, half polka. In amazement I see grey-whiskered men in black broadcloth whirling round with girls in book-muslin, and stout matrons clinging desperately to tall, weedy boys. All sorts and conditions join the throng; the Cornish tarantula has bitten them, and they are off! Preceded by the band, the drunken drummer banging at his instrument with the heartiest goodwill, and having the way cleared for them by a fussy old policeman, the long procession dances down the passage of the Angel into the main street. Then in at the side door of the next house, through the back parlour, the furniture of which has been heaped up on one side to permit of their progress, down the centre of the shop, and out into the street again! This goes on through countless houses, and through whole streets. Whenever the head of the procession emerges it is received with roars of delight; whenever the tail of the procession disappears it is followed by numerous adherents, who join on, and begin dancing too. The "Furry" tune is quaint and provocative in its melody; its effects on Mr. Cumberland, coupled, perhaps, with those of the various "glasses of bitter," are such, that to my alarm and astonishment, he forthwith announces his intention of "having a turn," and casts his eyes round among the assembled maidens, in search of one with whom to share the pleasures of the dance. It is only by pointing out to him the loss of official dignity which he must inevitably sustain, the impossibility of doing business the next day with a man who, twenty-four hours previously had seen him capering to the music of an intoxicated band, that I can induce him to refrain, and even then he wags his head, and beats time with his feet, and follows the dancers, cheering them to the echo.

There are three or four of these "rounds"

during the day, during the course of which nearly all the houses in the town, freely thrown open, are steadily danced through. Nor does the terpsichorean mania there end; for, as I understand, about nine in the evening, the better classes of the townspeople meet in the ball-room of the Angel, and dance away until dawn. These rites, however, are not for me, nor, indeed, for Mr. Cumberland, who, in the midst of all his pleasure, is mindful of business, and remembers that he has to be up betimes the next day. So we once again climb on to Davey's coach, and through the sweet spring evening air are carried back to Penryn, taking with us into the rattling train a pleasant reminiscence of the quaint celebration at which we have assisted, and of the lovely appearance of Falmouth harbour, bathed in the moonlight, which we caught a glimpse of ere we were borne away by the steam dragon.

THE PASSING BELL.

The mist creeps upward from the shadowy vale,
The mist hangs thickly o'er the little town,
The swollen river stirs its willows pale,
The swollen rill foams murky from the down.
The heavy drops upon the cold winds float,
The long gray grasses rustle in the dell,
And from the minster towers, note by note,
Booms the deep echo of the Passing Bell.

The Passing Bell, it wont of old to say,
"Pray for the parting soul, ye Christians all."
The eager traveller paused upon his way,
The busy peasant let his mattock fall.
The loiterer crossed his brow and hushed his jest,
The laughing child laid by his latest toy,
The solemn summons thrilling every breast,
Waking to prayer, love, business, grief, and joy.

Advancing years our ancient customs steal,
We toll the bell when all is over now,
When our stern truthful creed no late appeal,
Against our God's great dictum can allow.
But human agony, but human loss,
For the tree fallen, for the darling gone,
But nature's cry beneath the bitter cross,
Wails in the Passing Bell's funereal tone.

Thy wild wet dawn, oh year so newly born,
Thy days by fever's lurid lustre lit,
Thy nights of sobbing rain and winds forlorn,
Well does the dirge thy gloomy mood befit!
Pass thou—let winter hear the sad earth's prayers,
Come to thy throne usurped, gay glittering frost;
With pale blue skies, and keen health-giving airs,
And crisp dead leaves on fresh north breezes tossed.

CHRONICLES OF LONDON STREETS.

NEWGATE AND THE GORDON RIOTS.

THERE is nothing that more strikingly proves the utter want of imagination in the ordinary run of people than the habit in cities of naming a street, terrace, or square "New:" nor are Londoners more imaginative than others. Some recent topographer counts up in the metropolis no fewer than one hundred and eighty streets which bear this appellation which has long ago become a misnomer. Newgate is not very new now, for it has been a prison since King John's time. The present building dates back to a year after the Gordon riots, and four of the allegorical figures that adorn its south front are as old as 1672. It was originally the fifth of the seven gates of London Wall, and was erected, according to Stow, in the reign of Henry the First, or Stephen, when St. Paul's was rebuilding, and the highway from Aldgate and Cheap to Ludgate was stopped up. It was repaired in 1422 by the executors of the famous Whittington, lord mayor, and on that account the figure of Liberty which used to adorn the building had a cat at its feet. It was large enough for its purpose in 1672, when it was rebuilt; but London vice and crime soon out-grew the prison, and the result was such a crowding of felons that at once produced disorder and immorality, and disease and death followed remorselessly as ever on their track. The ventilation was bad, the water insufficient, and the room altogether inadequate. In his evidence before the House of Commons, Mr. Akerman, one of the keepers of Newgate, stated that, independently of great mortality among the prisoners, nearly two sets of turnkeys had died of jail-fever since he had been in office; and that at the memorable spring sessions in 1750, two of the judges, the lord mayor, several of the jury, and others, to the number of sixty persons and upwards, had died of the Newgate jail-distemper. The result was, that a new building was proposed by George Dance, the architect of the Mansion House; and on the 31st of May, 1770, Alderman Beckford laid the first stone.

The work evidently went on but slowly, for in 1780, when the old prison was burnt by the Gordon rioters, the new prison was not yet completed. The building was then pushed on; and in 1783, Tyburn was abandoned, and the first execution took place before the walls of Newgate.

The jail-birds that have rubbed their hideous faces against Newgate bars, have not been remarkable for the milder virtues. The mere burglar shone a saint among such villanous murderers and highwaymen as Jerry Abershaw and Blueskin, Galloping Dick and Sarah Malcolm; but still the prison has held good men with large hearts and pure hands, for Penn

thought over Christian charity in Newgate, and De Foe wrote there brave words against tyranny and intolerance.

The first great instance of prison-breaking from Newgate occurred in 1724, when the escapes of that nimble thief, Jack Sheppard, were for a time the talk of all London. On August the 30th, in that year, Sheppard and Blueskin were sentenced to death for stealing cloth from a Mr. Kneebone, a draper in the Strand, who had apprenticed Sheppard. Nimble Jack first broke off the spike from a hatch in the lodge at Newgate, leading from the condemned hole, and by the assistance of two women who came to see him at the hatch, was pulled through, and so escaped. On being retaken at Finchley, where he was hiding, the jailers threw the quick-eyed young thief into a strong room called the Castle, handcuffed him, loaded him with a heavy pair of irons, and chained him to a stout staple in the floor. People of all ranks came to see him, and all gave him money, but extreme care was taken that no one should pass him a chisel or file. One quiet afternoon, when the keepers were busy at the sessions, Jack went to work. He had already found a small nail, with which he could unfasten his chain from the floor. He then slipped off his handcuffs, and then fastened up his fetters as high as he could with his garters. In getting up the chimney, being stopped by an iron bar, he worked it out with a piece of his broken chain; with this weapon he soon forced his way into the Red Room over the Castle, and there found a large nail, which was in the highest degree useful to him. The Red Room door had not been opened for seven years; but Jack wrenched off the lock in less than seven minutes, and got into the passage leading to the chapel. To force a bolted door here, he broke a hole through the wall, and so pushed back the bolt; with an iron spike from the chapel door he got into an entry between the chapel and the lower leads. In the dark, Sheppard forced the box of the lock of the door of this entry. The next door being also locked, he forced that also. It was now eight o'clock; he now unbolted another door, and got over a wall to the upper leads. He then boldly went back for his blanket, as he resolved to alight on a turner's house adjoining Newgate. He made the blanket fast to the wall of Newgate, and sliding down, dropped on the turner's leads just as the clock struck nine. He got in at a garret window, and stole softly downstairs—a woman of the house hearing his irons clink, but thinking it was the cat—and let himself out. Just after twelve he passed by the watch-house of St. Sepulchre, and going up Gray's-inn-lane, hid himself in a cow-house in the fields near Tottenham-court. The next day he bribed a shoemaker with twenty shillings to procure him a smith's hammer and punch, and he then got rid of his irons. A few nights after he broke into a pawnbroker's shop in Drury-lane, stole a sword, some coats, snuff-boxes, rings, and watches, and rigged himself out in wig, ruffled shirt, silver-hilted sword, diamond ring, and gold watch. That same night, getting drunk, he was retaken and thrown into Newgate. Sir James Thornhill, Hogarth's father-in-law, painted his portrait in prison; and he was hung at Tyburn on the 16th of November, in the twenty-third year of his age. An opera and a farce were founded upon his adventures, and allusions to him were made by several City preachers of the day.

Of the state of Newgate in 1744 we have a very interesting record in the autobiography of that most excellent self-denying man, Silas Told, one of Wesley's school-teachers. His narrative shows us what vast good was effected by the Wesleyan missionaries in a corrupt city, at a time when our Church was rich and fat as it was lazy and intolerant. A sermon by Wesley, on the text, "I was sick and in prison, and ye visited me not," struck like an arrow in the conscience of Told, and the faint whisper of the inner voice roused him as if it had been a thunder-call from heaven. He felt it was his duty to visit prisoners; and, a few days after, a messenger came to the school, begging that some one might be sent to visit ten malefactors then under sentence of death. In the Wesleyan language, "they were all much awakened; one of them, named John Lancaster, was converted, and appeared full of the love of God." Told went to Newgate, and desired Lancaster to call his companions together into his cell. They all "seemed clear of their acceptance;" and Lancaster said that "that morning, about four o'clock, his conversion had taken place."

Out of these ten men, the death-warrants came down for eight; the other two, who remained hard and impenitent, were respited. The night before their execution the keeper had been requested to lock them

all together in one cell, that they might unite in prayer; and in the morning early, Silas Told and Sarah Peters, another school-teacher, visited them. "When the men were led down from the cell, they appeared like giants refreshed with wine, nor was the fear of death apparent on any of their countenances." Then going up to the chapel, Told and the young woman conversed with them in the press-yard room. Upon being called out to have their irons taken off, Lancaster came first. While they were unfettering his legs, in presence of the sheriff, Lancaster looked up to heaven with a pleasant smile, and said: "Glory be to God for the first moment of my entrance into this place! For before I came hither my heart was as hard as my cell wall, and my soul was as black as hell; but O, I am now washed, clearly washed from all my sins, and by one o'clock shall be with Jesus in paradise;" and he then exhorted the spectators to flee from the wrath to come.

The sheriff shed tears at hearing this, and asked Mr. Lancaster if he was in earnest, "being so greatly affected with his lively and animated spirits." When their irons were taken off they were remanded back to the press-yard room; but by some accident the smiths were a long time removing the last man's fetters. When he approached, Lancaster clapped his hands together and shouted with joy: "Here comes another of our little flock!" Then when the time came for the eight condemned men to get into the cart, Lancaster exhorted the populace to forsake their sins and to come to the throne of grace.

After this, Told formed a sort of religious society, thirty-six of the Newgate debtors being the first members. "Sometimes I conversed in public among the felons," says this excellent man; "and the Lord is witness to the horrible scenes and the dreadful emblem of the infernal pit which was there portrayed, consisting of swearing, cursing, blasphemies, and foul conversation." For several years, Told says, he met with repulses from the keepers and ordinary, as well as from the prisoners themselves. On Sunday mornings, Mr. Taylor, the ordinary, stationed himself near the door at Newgate to obstruct Told's entrance. On Sundays this good man preached to forty of the prisoners on the debtors' side, and formed them into an organised Wesleyan congregation. Some of Told's experiences among the criminals of Newgate were of a singular kind. The most remarkable case in his autobiography is that of six gentlemen, who, getting drunk at an election dinner at Chelmsford, went out and committed a highway robbery. One of these unfortunate men was Mr. Brett, the son of a Dublin clergyman; the second, Mr. Whalley, a country gentleman; a third, Mr. Morgan, an officer in the navy, engaged to be married to Lady Elizabeth Hamilton, the Duke of Hamilton's daughter. After ceaseless importunities, the king, George the Second, pardoned Mr. Morgan, but only on condition that he should not hear of the respite till at the place of execution. The poor fellow fainted when the sheriff produced the respite, and they loosened the halter, and lifted him out of the cart; and he was then put into a coach, in which Lady Hamilton was seated, and driven back, only half recovered by his love's tears and kisses, to Newgate. The other culprits, not a bit more guilty than the lucky lover of a duke's daughter were hung without mercy. Told, indefatigable in doing good, also attended to the last three of the Spitalfields weavers, who were hung for the "halter riots" at Bethnal-green. He has also left a minute account of the behaviour of Mrs. Brownrigg, who flogged to death her apprentice in Flower-de-Luce-court. The wretched hag confessed to him that when taken at Wandsworth she had hidden a clasp-knife in her stays, intending to stab herself, and prevent the shame and reproach of a public execution. On the day of execution, when the spectators (especially the women) were very cruel—cursing her, cheering, and throwing stones and mud—Told attended the penitent woman to the last. As he sat with her in the cart, after the executioner had tied her up to the gallows, at the Fleet-street end of Fetter-lane, Mrs. Brownrigg said to him, a horrible dread distorting her countenance: "Mr. Told, I have many times passed by this place, and always experienced that, when near this spot, a dreadful horror seized me, for fear that one day or other I should come to be hanged; this enters afresh on my mind now, and greatly terrifies me."

From the Old Bailey Session Papers for June, 1780, we gather a very vivid and picturesque notion of the attack on Newgate during the Gordon riots. The mob came pouring down Holborn, between six and seven o'clock, on the evening of the 6th of June. There were three flags carried by the ringleaders—the first of green silk, with a Protestant motto; the second, dirty blue, with a red cross; the

third, a flag of the Protestant Union. A sailor named Jackson had hoisted the second flag in Palace-yard, when Justice Hyde had launched a party of horse upon the people; and when the rabble had sacked the justice's house in St. Martin's-street, Jackson shouted, "Newgate, a-hoy!" and led the people on to the Old Bailey. Mr. Akerman, a friend of Boswell's, and one of the keepers of Newgate, had had intimation of the danger two hours before, when a friend of one of the prisoners called upon him just as he was packing up his plate for removal, told him "he should be the one hung presently," and cursed him. Exactly at seven, one of the rioters knocked at Mr. Akerman's door, which had been already barred, bolted, and chained. A maid-servant had just put up the shutters, when the glass over the hall-door was dashed into her face. The ringleader who knocked was better dressed than the rest, and wore a dark brown coat and a round hat. The man knocked three times, and rang three times; then, finding no one came, ran down the steps, "made his obeisance to the mob," pointed to the door, then retired. The mob was perfectly organised, and led by about thirty men walking three abreast. Thirty men carried iron crowbars, mattocks, and chisels, and after them followed "an innumerable company," armed with bludgeons and the spokes of cart-wheels. The band instantly divided into three parts—one set went to work at Mr. Akerman's door with the mattocks, a second went to the debtors' door, and a third to the felons'. A shower of bludgeons instantly demolished the windows of the keeper's house; and while these sticks were still falling in showers, two men, one of them a mad Quaker, the son of a rich corn-factor, who wore a mariner's jacket, came forward with a scaffold-pole, and drove it like a battering-ram at the parlour shutters. A lad in a sailor's jacket then got on a man's shoulders, and jammed in the half-broken shutters with furious blows of his bullet head. A chimney-sweeper's boy then scrambled in, cheered by the mob, and after him the mad Quaker. A moment more and the Quaker appeared at the first-floor window, flinging out pictures into the street. Presently, the second parlour window gave way, the house door was forced, and the furniture and broken chattels in the street were set in a blaze. All this time a circle of men, better dressed than the rest, stood in the Old Bailey, exciting and encouraging the rioters. The leader of these sympathisers was a negro servant, named Benjamin Bowsey, afterwards hung for his share in the riot. One of the leaders in this attack was a mad waiter from the St. Albans Tavern, named Thomas Haycock; he was very prominent, and he swore that there should not be a prison standing in London on the morrow, and that the Bishop of London's house and the Duke of Norfolk's should come down that night. They were well supported, he shouted to the mob, for there were six or seven noblemen and members of Parliament on their side. This man helped to break up a bureau, and collected sticks to burn down the doors of Akerman's house. While Akerman's house was still burning, the servants escaping over the roofs, and Akerman's neighbours were down among the mob, entreating them to spare the houses of innocent persons, a waiter, who wore a hat with a blue cockade in it, named Francis Mockford, went up to the prison-gate and held up the main key, and shouted to the turnkeys, "D—— you, here is the key of Newgate; open the door!" Mockford, who was eventually sentenced to death for this riot, afterwards took the prison keys and flung them over Westminster Bridge. George Sims, a tripeman in St. James's Market, always forward in street quarrels, then went up to the great gate in the Old Bailey with some others, and swore desperately that he would have the gates down—curse him, he would have the gates down! Then the storm broke; the mob rushed on the gate with the sledge-hammers and pickaxes they had stolen from coachmakers, blacksmiths, and braziers in Drury-lane and Long-acre, and plied them with untiring fury. The tripeman, who carried a bludgeon, urged them on; and the servant of Akerman, having known the man for several years, called to him through the hatch, "Very well, Mr. George the tripeman; I shall mark you in particular!" Then John Glover, a black, a servant of a Mr. Phillips, a barrister in Lincoln's Inn, who was standing on the steps leading to the felons' gate (the main gate), dressed in a rough short jacket, and a round hat trimmed with dirty silver lace, thumped at the door with a gun-barrel, which he afterwards tried to thrust through the grating into the faces of the turnkeys, while another split the door with a hatchet. The mob, finding they could not force the stones out round the hatch, then piled Akerman's shattered furniture, and placing it against the gates, set the heap on fire.

Nine or ten times the gate caught fire,

and as often the turnkeys inside pushed down the burning furniture with broomsticks, which they pushed through the hatch, and kept swilling the gates with water, in order to cool them, and to keep the lead that soldered the hinges from melting and giving way. But all their efforts were in vain; for the flames, now spreading fast from Akerman's house, gradually burnt into the fore-lodge and chapel, and set the different wards one after the other on fire. Crabbe the poet, who was there as a spectator, describes seeing the prisoners come up out of the dark cells with their heavy irons, and looking pale and scared. Some of them were carried off on horseback, their irons still on, in triumph by the mob, who then went and burnt down the Fleet. At the trial of Richard Hyde, the poor mad Quaker, who had been one of the first to scramble through Mr. Akerman's windows, the most conclusive proofs were brought forward of the prisoner's insanity. A grocer in Bishopsgate-street, with whom he had lodged, deposed to his burning a Bible, and to his thrashing him. One day at the Doctor Butler's Head, in Coleman-street, the crazed fellow had come in and pretended to cast the nativities of persons drinking there. He also prophesied how long each of them would live. On hearing this evidence, the prisoner broke out: "Well, and they might live three hundred years, if they knew how to live; but they gorge themselves like aldermen. Callipash or callipee kills half the people." It was also shown that, the night after the burning of Newgate, the prisoner came to a poor woman's house in Bedford-court, Covent-garden, and he then wore an old grey great-coat and a flapped hat, painted blue. As the paint was wet, the woman asked him to let her dry it. He replied, "No, you are a fool; my hat is *blue*" (the Protestant colour); "it is the colour of the heavens. I would not have it dried for the world." When the woman brought him a pint of beer, he drank once, and then pushed it angrily on one side. He then said, "I have tasted it once, I must taste it three times; it is against the heavens to drink only once out of a pot." Doctor Munro, the physician who attended George the Third in his madness, deposed to the insanity both of the prisoner's father and the prisoner. He was sent to a mad-house.

Crabbe, who, having failed as a surgeon and apothecary down at Aldborough, his native place, had just come up to London to earn his bread as a poet, and being on the brink of starvation, was about to apply to Burke for patronage and bread. Rambling in a purposeless way about London to while away the miserable time, the young poet happened to reach the Old Bailey just as the ragged rioters set it on fire to warm their Protestantism. Suddenly, at a turning out of Ludgate-hill, on his way back to his lodgings at a hairdresser's near the Exchange, a scene of terror and horror broke red upon the view of the mild young Suffolk apothecary. The new prison, Crabbe, in his Journal (June the 8th), kept for the perusal of his Myra, says, was a very large, strong, and beautiful building, having two wings besides Mr. Akerman's house, and strong intermediate works and other adjuncts. Akerman had four rioters in custody, and these rascals the mob demanded. He begged he might send to the sheriff, but this was not permitted. "How he escaped, or where he is gone, I know not; but just at the time I speak of, they set fire to his house, broke in, and threw every piece of furniture they could find into the street, firing them also in an instant. The engines came" (they were mere squirts in those days), "but were only suffered to preserve the private houses near the prison." This was about half-past seven. "As I was standing near the spot, there approached another body of men—I suppose five hundred—and Lord George Gordon in a coach drawn by the mob, towards Alderman Bull's, bowing as he passed along. He is a lively-looking young man in appearance, and nothing more, though just now the reigning hero. By eight o'clock Akerman's house was in flames. I went close to it, and never saw anything so dreadful. The prison was, as I said, a remarkably strong building; but, determined to force it, they broke the gates with crows and other instruments, and climbed up the outside of the cell part, which joins the two great wings of the building, where the felons were confined; and I stood where I plainly saw their operations. They broke the roof, tore away the rafters, and having got ladders, they descended. Not Orpheus himself had more courage or better luck. Flames all around them, and a body of soldiers expected, they defied and laughed at all opposition. The prisoners escaped. I stood and saw about twelve women and eight men ascend from their confinement to the open air, and they were conducted through the streets in their chains. Three of these were to be hanged on Friday" (Newgate was burnt on the Tuesday).

"You have no conception of the frenzy of the multitude. This being done, and Akerman's house now a mere shell of brickwork, they kept a store of flame there for other purposes. It became red-hot, and the doors and windows appeared like the entrance to so many volcanoes. With some difficulty they then fired the debtors' prison, broke the doors, and they, too, all made their escape. Tired of the scene, I went home, and returned again at eleven o'clock at night. I met large bodies of horse and foot soldiers, coming to guard the Bank, and some houses of Roman Catholics near it. Newgate was at the time open to all; any one might get in, and, what was never the case before, any one might get out. I did both, for the people now were chiefly lookers-on. The mischief was done, and the doers of it gone to another part of the town" (to Bloomsbury-square, to burn Lord Mansfield's house). "But I must not omit what struck me most: about ten or twelve of the mob getting to the top of the debtors' prison, whilst it was burning, to halloo. They appeared robed in black smoke mixed with sudden bursts of fire—like Milton's infernals, who were as familiar with flame as with each other."

On the Wednesday, the day after the fire, a big carelessly-dressed man worked his way to the ruins from Bolt-court, Fleet-street. The burly man's name was Doctor Samuel Johnson, and he wrote to Mrs. Thrale and her husband a brief account of what had happened since the Friday before. On that day Lord George Gordon and the mob went to Westminster, and that night the Protestants burnt the Catholic chapel in Duke-street, Lincoln's-inn-fields. On Monday they gutted Sir George Saville's house in Leicester-square; on Tuesday pulled down the house of Sir John Fielding, the blind magistrate and the novelist's half-brother, in Bow-street; and the same night burnt Newgate, Lord Mansfield's house in Bloomsbury, and a Catholic chapel in Moorfields. On Wednesday they burnt the Fleet and the King's Bench, and attacked the Bank of England, but were driven off by a party of constables headed by John Wilkes.

"On Wednesday," says the doctor, to come to what he actually saw himself, "I walked with Doctor Scott to look at Newgate, and found it in ruins, with the fire yet glowing. As I went by, the Protestants were plundering the Sessions House at the Old Bailey. There were not, I believe, a hundred; but they did their work at leisure, in full security, without sentinels, without trepidation, as men lawfully employed in full day. Such is the cowardice of a commercial place. On Wednesday they broke open the Fleet, and the King's Bench, and the Marshalsea, and Wood-street Compter, and Clerkenwell Bridewell, and released all the prisoners, and some people were threatened. Mr. Strahan advised me to take care of myself; and one might see the glare of conflagration fill the sky from many parts. The sight was dreadful. . . . Several chapels have been destroyed, and several inoffensive Papists have been plundered; but the high sport was to burn the jails. This was a good rabble trick. The debtors and criminals were all set at liberty; but of the criminals, as has always happened, many are already retaken, and two pirates have surrendered themselves, and it is expected that they will be pardoned." And then follows a fine touch of irony: "Jack" (Wilkes) "who was always zealous for order and decency, declares that if he be trusted with power he will not leave a rioter alive. There is, however, now no longer any need of heroism or bloodshed; no blue ribbon" (the badge of the rioters) "is any longer worn." As for Thrale, his brewery escaped pretty well: the men gave away a cask or two of beer to the mob, and when the rioters came on a second and more importunate visit, the soldiers received them.

Boswell, always bent on scraping acquaintance, however intrusively, with any famous or notorious person, had been introduced to Mr. Akerman, the keeper of Newgate, long before the Gordon riots. Boswell, who loved a hanging almost as well as George Selwyn, says that his "esteemed friend Mr. Akerman discharged his very important trust with intrepid firmness, tenderness, and charity;" and he tells an interesting story of Akerman's courage and promptitude, the recital of which won for him the praise both of Johnson and Burke.

Many years before the Gordon riots a fire broke out in the brick addition to the old jail. The frightened prisoners, breaking into a tumult, began to shout, "We shall be burnt! we shall be burnt! Down with the gate!" Akerman at once hurried down, showed himself at the gate, and after long confused shouts of "Hear him! hear him!" obtained silence. He then calmly told the men that the gate must not come down, that they were under his care, and could not be permitted to escape He could, he said, assure them that there

was no fear, for the fire was not in the stone prison; and that if they would be quiet, he then promised to come in among them, and lead them to a further end of the building; offering, in addition, not to leave them till they were reassured, and gave him leave. To this generous proposal they agreed. Mr. Akerman then, having first made them fall back from the gate, lest they should be tempted to break out, went in, closed the gate, and, with the determined resolution of an ancient Roman, ordered the outer turnkey upon no account to unbar the gate, even though the prisoners should break their word (which he trusted they would not), and by force bring him to order it. "Never mind me," said he, "should that happen." The prisoners then peaceably followed him through passages of which he had the keys to a part of the jail the farthest from the fire. Having, by this judicious conduct, says Boswell, fully satisfied them that there was no immediate risk, if any at all, he then addressed them: "Gentlemen, you are now convinced that I told you true. I have no doubt that the engines will soon extinguish this fire. If they should not, a sufficient guard will come, and you shall be all taken out and lodged in the compters. I assure you, upon my word and honour, that I have not a farthing insured. I have left my house that I might take care of you. I will keep my promise, and stay with you, if you insist upon it; but if you will allow me to go out and look after my family and property, I shall be obliged to you." Struck with this courage, truthfulness, and honourable sense of duty, the felons shouted: "Master Akerman, you have done bravely. It was very kind of you. By all means go and take care of your own concerns." He did so accordingly; and they remained, and were all preserved. Doctor Johnson said of this man, whom Wellington would have esteemed: "Sir, he who has long had constantly in his view the worst of mankind, and is yet eminent for the humanity of his disposition, must have had it originally in a high degree, and continued to cultivate it very carefully."

LELGARDE'S INHERITANCE.

IN TWELVE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER V.

ALMOST before light on the following morning, I was conscious of a soft kiss on my cheek, and mischievous fingers pulling my hair; and, opening my sleepy eyes, I beheld Lelgarde, to my astonishment, not only up and dressed, but equipped for walking: her scarlet cloak wrapped round her, her black hat, with its long white cock's feather, on her head, sable muff, dainty Balmoral boots, looped-up dress, and bat's-wing petticoat, all complete.

"My dear, are you quite mad?" was my natural exclamation.

"People are mad who lie in bed on sparkling frosty mornings like this," she answered, throwing up the window, and pointing to the clear red dawn; "look there, you lazy woman, look there! Come, make haste, Joany; I have set my heart on an early walk; we will go to the farm, and get a draught of milk from the cow."

"Shut the window, then, for pity's sake," said I, with a rueful glance at my bath, in all its icy horrors, which, at that hour, there was no hope of mitigating.

"It is delightful," Lelgarde exclaimed, following my look; "I am all in a glow from mine." And she tossed back the mass of flaxen hair, which hung wet and heavy, all the ripple drenched out of it, over her shoulders.

Of course I did what Lelgarde told me, and dragged up my middle-aged limbs from their cosey resting-place, and dressed with what speed I could, marvelling much what this new caprice might mean.

"Have you had a bad night?" I asked, when we were crossing the frost-covered paddock in the direction of the farm.

"A bad night? What! because I get up an hour earlier than usual?"

"You are not answering my question, you know," I suggested.

But no further answer could I get; and so we arrived at the farm, saw the cows milked, and went shivering home to breakfast. Lelgarde would have routed me out again as soon as the meal was over, but I struck at last. "You will tire yourself quite out, child," I said; and I was startled by the tone in which she answered:

"That is just what I am trying to do."

That day, however, I was only amused at her vagaries; but when time passed on, and the same strange restlessness still beset her, I grew vaguely uneasy. Her hours were becoming uncertain; sometimes she was still asleep when the breakfast-bell rang; sometimes she was afoot before dawn, though she never again pressed me into the service. I began to wish that she would, as I might then have exercised some control over the length of her rambles. All day long she was rushing about, devising employments, evidently for the mere sake of being up and doing; and, by the

evening, she was always thoroughly exhausted, and obliged, though she fought hard against it, to give way to fatigue, and collapse on an arm-chair. All this might have been merely the excitement natural to her very new mode of life; but I saw, with uneasiness, that she was evidently not well. In spite of her long walks, her appetite flagged, her attitudes became languid, her step lost its spring; and remembering her childhood, I began to feel as if, in some mysterious way, Athelstanes was destined to be fatal to her.

About this time our few neighbours began to call, and invitations to arrive, chiefly to stately dinners, or sometimes to dine and sleep—entertainments, to me, of the deadly-lively order, but which were apparently to Lelgarde's taste, for she always accepted them, and was invariably brighter for some days afterwards, especially when we had spent a day or two from home.

One evening, as I was crossing the hall on my way to dress, I came full on Lelgarde, emerging from the door of what we still called "poor Miss Hilda's room." She gave a start, like a guilty thing, and shrank into the dark doorway. I stopped short, and began to give her a good scolding.

"Lelgarde, you are really very silly to be always haunting that cold dreary room. If you fancy it as a living-room, why not order them to light a fire there, and let us sit there altogether?"

"No, I thank you," she answered. "And as to being cold, feel." She put her hand in mine; it was hot and feverish, and the light from the hall-lamp showed that her face was flushed, and her eyes unnaturally brilliant.

"Do you think I am in much danger of catching cold?" she asked, with a nervous laugh, which sounded as if it might quiver off into a cry. I was really frightened.

"Child, what is it?" I asked, going with her into her bedroom; "is anything vexing you? Are you fretting?"

I stopped short; the idea of Harry Goldie occurred to me.

"Fretting? What should fret me?" she answered, pettishly. "Come, it is high time to be dressing." And she rang for her maid, evidently glad to be quit of me and my questionings.

We were going to dine at the rectory. Our rector and his wife were pleasant people, and kind neighbours, and we were always glad to go there. To-night the party consisted only of ourselves and the rector's brother, a barrister, now attending the assizes, which were going on in the nearest town. He was a little, black-looking man, with sharp eyes, and a quick manner, and a certain air of being condescendingly amused at everything, and knowing all about it, which I have often remarked since in those of his profession. I saw his quick glance run over Lelgarde with keen appreciation—admiration is scarcely the word—and he took an early opportunity of seating himself by her side. Certainly she appeared to singular advantage, the flush on her cheek and the feverish light in her eyes supplying all that her face was sometimes wanting in. Her graceful half-mourning became her well, and the one or two pearl ornaments which she wore were like herself, I thought, so pure, and fair, and delicate. Her ease in society was always a marvel to me, considering how she had been brought up. She was entirely what she should have been, retiring, quiet, but perfectly unembarrassed. No wonder Mr. Seymour Kennedy's quick eye marked her down at once.

He and his brother came into the drawing-room after dinner, eagerly talking over a case which had been pronounced the case of the assizes; its chief feature being the discovery of a will after it had been lost for many years.

"The attempt to prove it a forgery broke down utterly," said Mr. Seymour Kennedy; "and rightly, for it was undoubtedly genuine, but the story of the discovery was so strange that it gave fair ground for the trial."

"A curious case of sudden recollection, was it not?"

"Quite so. The old man's adopted son, the present possessor in fact, after having acquiesced in the estate going to the heir-at-law, the will being missing, one day, on chancing to be shown into a different dressing-room from usual to wash his hands, suddenly remembered having seen his father, as he had always called him, put away the will, calling his attention to the fact, in the drawer of an old bureau, which had stood neglected in the corner for years and years. The young man was six years old when the will was placed there. He is nearly thirty now."

"Memory plays us strange tricks, I know, sometimes," said the rector. "Witness Walter Scott's story which he cooks up in the Antiquary."

"And I once met with another case," said his brother, addressing Lelgarde all the time, "where a will was discovered in an almost similar way; but then the finder believed himself to have received a visitation from his late father, who revealed the hiding-place to him in a dream. Evidently the force of memory working unconsciously on the sleeping brain."

"Do you think so?" Lelgarde began; her voice was hoarse and died away. Mr. Seymour Kennedy turned towards her, and, in the courteous, lowered tone he always assumed in addressing women:

"You were speaking," he said.

She gathered voice and went on:

"In this last case there was an apparition—a spiritual visitation. Do you put that down as a mere trick of memory?"

"I see you resent the slur upon the ghosts," he answered, playfully. "Is it unfair to ask if you believe in them?"

She hesitated, and her glowing cheek grew quite pale. We all looked at her in surprise, she seemed to take the subject so unnecessarily to heart. Suddenly she looked full up in his face, and spoke quickly and eagerly:

"No, I do not. I will not believe in them. Such utter disbelief as yours is catching, I think. It is pleasant to feel sure that some natural, every-day reason can be found for everything. You think that is so, do you not?"

I could see that he was flattered by her appeal to his judgment.

"If you were in the habit of sifting evidence, you would come to that same conclusion, I am sure," he said, gently; "nerves—optical delusion."

"Oh! but that is worse," Lelgarde said, "to think that the—the terror is part of ourselves, in our own brain. Is not the thought unbearable?"

"Only that science can remedy it," he answered, in a tone rather in contrast to her excited cadences; "no need to break one's heart over a ghost, if you hold, as I do, that quinine or camomile tea has the power of laying it."

"Is Athelstanes haunted, Miss Athelings?" asked Mrs. Kennedy, striking in, indiscreetly, as I thought. "It looks as if it ought to be."

"If it is," I said, brusquely, I am afraid, for the subject was one I hated to hear Lelgarde engaged on, "we will hope the ghosts will keep to themselves; in such a large house, it is a shame if they cannot be peaceable."

Our carriage was announced, and we went home, after Mr. Seymour Kennedy had asked if he might call the next day.

"How do you like him, Lelgarde," I asked, the next morning, as we sat at breakfast.

"Very much indeed," she responded, heartily, "don't you?"

"Pretty well; he condescends too much to please me."

"Joan, could anything be more courteous?"

"Just so, but with a certain air as if he were saying, 'Don't mind being a fool, because I prefer you so.' He plays with his subject, and will never meet a woman on equal ground—no, I do not appreciate Mr. Seymour Kennedy."

"He is strong and clear-headed, and pleasant to listen to, though," said my sister with a sigh, and I looked at her closely.

"You look better, my pet," was the result of my study. Indeed, her cheek looked rounder, her eyes had their own soft brightness, she was eating a comfortable breakfast, and pouring out the tea with a steady hand, good symptoms, all of which I had missed of late.

"Oh, yes," she responded, cheerily, I have had such a good night."

"Do you ever have bad ones?" I asked, struck by the implied admission.

"If I do," she answered, gaily, "I suppose it is for want of the quinine or the camomile tea, which are to put every thing to rights for us," and, carolling like a bird, she sprang up from the table, and put her arm through mine for our daily visit to the poultry-yard. One of Miss Etheldreda's few human weaknesses had been for fowls, and Lelgarde was inclined to follow in her footsteps, so that a long after-breakfast lounge to see them fed had become an institution. When the barley was all devoured, we turned homewards, and Lelgarde, suddenly remembering that she wished to speak to Mrs. Bracebridge, turned to the back door, the nearest way to her room. Angry voices sounded from the passage, and in the dread of plunging into a domestic row, which I suppose all wise mistresses share, Lelgarde stopped short in the porch, with a look at me, half ludicrous, half dismayed.

"I desire that not another word may be said on the subject in this house," said Mrs. Bracebridge's voice in solemn indignation; "a pack of nonsense, or a heap of lies, Betsy Jane; I give you your choice which name you like to call 'em by."

"'Twas not I only as see it, ma'am; ask Ellen," returned a whimpering voice with a sniff of injured innocence.

"And what was Ellen doing out of her room at that time of night?" retorted the dame. "Been down to fetch her prayer-book, had she? A likely story. And much good her prayer-book is to her, or to you either, if it don't teach you better than to give the house a bad name in this way."

"I never give the house a bad name, ma'am." Another sniff. "But if I was to die for it, we did see a white figure walking up the stairs along the gallery; and what's more, it did seem as though it comed from Miss Hilda's room."

"And it did seem to die away, like, just by that corner where Miss Atheling do sleep, and that's the truth; but law, I never thought no harm by mentioning of it," said another voice, lachrymose likewise.

"'Twas not I; 'twas James as said that about the white lady walking, when the head of the family were going to die."

"What! James saw it too, did he?" asked Mrs. Bracebridge, sharply, not to say ferociously.

"Lord forgive you, Mrs. Bracebridge, for saying such a thing. How do I know about what James should see?"

"Well, well, mind your work, and don't get chattering with the men; and I'll warrant you won't see no more white ladies; we don't want 'em here, nor no black gentlemen neither; and just remember this, you Betsy Jane and Ellen; if I hear any more of it, it's a month's warning to both of you, do you see?"

Steps, sniffs, and scoldings died away along the passage, and I turned laughing to meet Lelgarde's eyes; she had sunk quietly down on the stone seat in the porch, and fainted dead away.

CHAPTER VI.

It was long before Mrs. Bracebridge and I succeeded in restoring Lelgarde to consciousness; and it was a relief to me when the doctor, to whom I sent at once, took his place at her bedside. He asked a few questions, prescribed a sedative, recommended her to keep quiet, and assured us that there was no cause for uneasiness; but when he and I were alone, he asked me if she had been undergoing any strain on her spirits, or if her nerves had received any shock. And when I told him the history of her illness long ago, he said there was the more need for care now.

"Not that I can detect anything seriously amiss, but she is in a highly nervous state, and requires constant cheerful society, pleasant occupation, exercise without fatigue;" and with a few directions as to her diet he went away.

It was all very well to prescribe cheerful society, but where was it to be found? The neighbours were few; of those few a sprinkling only had been considered worthy to associate with the house of Atheling, and we had no friends whom we could summon from afar to fill our house and make it merry. But fortune favoured us to some extent, for Mr. Seymour Kennedy took to coming down to spend Sunday at the rectory, or rather part of Sunday, for he had to start by the evening mail, paying dearly, by two long night journeys, for his few hours of quiet and country air. "Quiet and country air!" those were said to be the attractions; but I had my suspicions that the heiress of Athelstanes counted for something, too. He began to haunt the house on Sunday afternoons, and certainly brought with him a pleasant sense of life and stir, and communion with the outer world. But I did not, I could not, like him, and I was surprised to see that Lelgarde was evidently attracted by him. In the old London days her enthusiasm had been an amusement to me, though I could not always go along with it; the bright earnestness with which she and Harry Goldie would chatter about music and painting, used to make even the dingy November fogs seem cheery; and here was a man to whom enthusiasm was impossible, who spoke of most things with a covert sneer, and who patronised where Lelgarde was wont to reverence. But she did like him; his coming brightened her up wonderfully, and when he had been absent longer than usual she drooped visibly.

It was a wild afternoon towards the end of March; since dawn, a cold blast blowing from the moors had been making the trees crack and groan, and every window and chimney-pot set up its own peculiar shriek or rattle.

The rain beat desperately against the window, and came fizzing down on the logs in the wide grate; it was a day to make one shiver, and pity any one who had to be out of doors. Lelgarde evidently felt the depressing influence of the weather; she was languid, and yet restless, and seemed unable to settle to anything.

"What weather! what a night it will

be!" I said, by way of saying something, after a long silence.

Lelgarde, who was lying all her length along on a couch, sprang up and hurried to the window.

"What a night indeed!" she repeated, dreamily; "will it ever stop raining? And there goes the wind again, oh!"

"Don't stand and watch it; come to the fire," I said. And she came, leaning against the mantelpiece for a moment. Then, muttering something that I did not hear, she left the room.

It was about an hour later that the door stealthily opened, and admitted Mrs. Bracebridge with an anxious countenance. "Oh, Miss Smith, I beg your pardon, ma'am; I hoped my mistress might be come in."

"She has not been out."

"Oh, I beg your pardon, ma'am, she went out nearly an hour ago, which I could hardly believe my eyes as 'twas she; but John, who is just come in for the post-bag, he met her, ma'am, on the road into Trembleton. Surely she is never going in there such a day as this."

I was aghast. What could the child be thinking of? Almost unable to believe that she had done so wild a thing, I hurried up to her room, but it was empty, and Mrs. Bracebridge pointed to her little indoor slippers lying on the floor, her apron on the bed. There could be no doubt that she had gone out.

"Well, we must do our best to prevent her catching cold," I said, stirring up the fire. "It is a pity she has run the risk, for she has not been looking well for some time."

"No, indeed, ma'am," said Mrs. Bracebridge. And then, dropping her voice, she added, with some hesitation:

"I beg your pardon, ma'am, but I hope nobody has gone and worritted my mistress. I hope none of the servants has been carrying their ridiculous fancies to her."

"You mean this fancy about the house being haunted," I said, smiling; for some words had passed between Mrs. Bracebridge and me on the subject before. "She certainly once heard some talk about it the day she fainted; but she has never alluded to it since. Why do you ask?"

"Well, ma'am," continued the old woman, in the same mysteriously low tone, "I must confess that there is a deal of talk going on, and 'tis not in my power to stop it. The maids, they will have it, that night after night, more nights than not, there is a white figure to be seen, gliding like, between my mistress's room and poor Miss Hilda's."

"In old houses like this there is generally some such fancy. I suppose there is a tradition about some white lady, is there not?"

"So they begin to try to make me believe now, ma'am. All I can say is, I never heard tell of her before; and as to Miss Hilda's ghost, it is a shame to say so, poor lady, and most disrespectful too. But there is something strange. I do begin to believe that."

"Have you seen the white figure yourself, Mrs. Bracebridge?"

"Well, ma'am, I cannot altogether deny that I have; but as I were only just passing along the upper gallery, 'twere but a glimpse like that I caught."

The old body had evidently made off at the first symptom of the ghost; and probably all the maids had done the same, for on inquiry, I found nobody could give a clear account of it, only that it was dressed in true ghost fashion—all in white.

"Have you missed anything?" I asked, with scepticism worthy of Mr. Seymour Kennedy. "No? Then depend upon it somebody is playing a foolish trick. Better take no notice, and then it will be no fun for them to go on with it."

There was a step on the stairs, and Lelgarde opened the door, springing back with one of her violent nervous starts on seeing that her room was occupied. She looked ghastly, her colourless face rendered more disconsolate by the loosened hair which the rain had plastered against it, her cloak dripping, her hat a dreary mass of drenched plumage.

I wasted no words, but, with Mrs. Bracebridge's help, I got her out of her wet things into her dressing-gown, put her into an arm-chair close by the fire, and plied her with hot tea, and then, when the housekeeper was gone, I asked her severely what she meant by it.

"Don't, Joan," she answered, pettishly, turning her head away. "I only walked into Trembleton to get something I wanted."

"As if you had no grooms about the place; as if the boy were not going to the post-office. Lelgarde, you deserve to be well whipped and sent to bed."

"Whip me if you like," she said, with a languid smile, "but for pity's sake don't put me to bed. I hate my bed; I hate

the night. And there, it is growing dark already."

"Dinner comes first in the order of things," I said, as I rang for her maid, and left her, marvelling much at her queer ways, and vaguely uneasy at the general aspect of affairs.

That night we sat up late, for Lelgarde would not go to bed.

"Who could sleep," she said, "with such a tempest raving outside?"

It was nearly midnight when I wished her good-night, and went to my own room, a little way further down the same gallery. As I prepared to wind up my watch, just before stepping into bed, I found that it had stopped; and I thought I would steal gently to my sister's room, creep cautiously in, and try, without waking her, to ascertain the time by the little travelling-clock on her mantelpiece. As I had been very slow in getting to bed, I took it for granted that she was already asleep. Under this impression I opened the door without knocking, and was creeping in, when I suddenly met Lelgarde, in her dressing-gown, advancing towards me, but with such a hurried, detected air that I stopped short, feeling as if I had committed an unwarrantable intrusion.

"I beg your pardon," I said; and I began explaining my errand, but broke off at sight of what it was that she was trying to put hurriedly out of sight. "Lelgarde, what are you doing with a bottle of laudanum?"

"Not trying to kill myself, I assure you," she answered, with a faint smile; "only trying a second edition of Mr. Piecroft's sedative."

"Child, child, you should never meddle with such edge-tools. Did he tell you the proper quantity?"

"The chemist at Trembleton did."

"At Trembleton?" I stood aghast as an idea struck me. "Lelgarde, could that be your errand out this afternoon?"

"Forgive me, dearest Joany," she murmured; "indeed, it would do me less harm than such a night as I should have otherwise. Hark!"

And as a fresh blast of wind drove the rain against the window, she shrank as if it had been a blow, then stretched out her hand for the bottle. I snatched it away, and dashed it into the fire. Lelgarde burst into tears.

"You are cruel. You do not know what you have done," she sobbed, passionately.

Now I was sure that something was seriously amiss, and I determined to get to the bottom of it.

"Lelgarde," I said, very gravely, "this is very foolish, and it is more foolish still to run the risk of getting into a fatal habit to escape from a little nervousness or sleeplessness. You do not know what you are doing. Has it never occurred to you that it is wrong?"

"Is it?" she said, sinking down in a chair in a helpless, nerveless attitude. "Must I bear on? Is it a sin to try to escape from my wretchedness? Then God help me; for a more miserable creature does not breathe."

"But what is your trouble? Lelgarde, darling, surely you can tell me anything?"

She shook her head.

"At all events, promise me that you will play no more foolish tricks with your health."

"Very well," she said, looking up at me suddenly, almost fiercely. "I promise; but you must take the consequences. If I can get no relief, if I am driven desperate, you must be responsible."

And there was the wild look of a hunted animal in her eyes, a look that painfully recalled her childish days. I felt a thrill of real fear, but I stifled all signs of it, and spoke in the quiet, authoritative tone that had always soothed her.

"Nonsense, my dear; nobody thinks of hunting or driving you. Come, we will not part again to-night. It is high time we were in bed; but first tell me all the troubles—horrible dreams, or not being able to sleep, which is it?"

She shook her head, and was silent for a moment; then, with the same startling suddenness, she exclaimed:

"I will—I will risk your telling me it is all fancy or nonsense; anything is better than this. Sit down, Joany, here, close, closer still, and I will tell you all."

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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XXIX. PAUL'S TROUBLES BEGIN.

Days passed, and Katherine had domesticated herself thoroughly at Monasterlea. She had taken possession of all the best things in the house with the most charming goodwill. The prettiest and most comfortable furniture had been carried into her room, and she had the warmest seat at the fire and at the table. The little red couch under the black archway in the parlour, which was covered with Miss Martha's knitting, and cushioned with pillows stuffed with down off Miss Martha's own geese, she had at once made quite her own. She had taken possession of Bridget, so that the handmaiden did little besides attend upon Miss Archbold. The visitor had also her hostess in thorough subjection, and she wrought her will pretty freely upon May, in spite of that young lady's rebellion against the tyranny of her rule.

But Katherine's attentions were chiefly devoted to Paul, and to no one else did she care to be agreeable. All through the dark winter days, in the quiet little cottage, she was restless and troublesome, and sorely tried the patience of her entertainers; but when the evening brought Paul her mood was sure to change. She took as much pains to amuse May's lover as though her life had depended on his being merry. And Paul was glad to be amused, though he did not like Katherine.

He did not like Katherine, and yet it was certain that she exercised an extraordinary influence over his actions. She absorbed his attention, in spite of his dissatisfaction and unwillingness to gratify her. She exacted from him a hundred little marks of homage, such as May had never looked for, nor thought of. He became so busy with her, and so tormented by her, that he soon found he had very little time to attend to his business. He became curiously changed in a short space of time, his temper alternating between bursts of anger at himself and her, indulged in generally during the hours of his absence from her side, and unreasoning fits of mirth, which almost invariably took possession of him whilst in her presence, and left bitterness of heart and exhaustion of body when they passed away.

Meanwhile May stood aside patiently, not wondering that the brilliant beauty should be found more amusing and attractive than herself. She stifled her heartache, for was she not sure of Paul's love? And why need she be jealous, and ungenerous, and unkind? Tender trust such as Paul felt in her was a thousand times more precious than the admiration of a moment. Therefore she would be tolerant, and await, however longingly, the happy hour when Katherine should take her way back to Camlough. But as weeks went by, and Paul's strange unhappiness increased, all thought of her own pain passed away, and keen fear for his welfare caused her a misery far more sharp than she had yet suffered. It was but a short time since he had begged her to save him from anything that should look to her like the beginning of that evil which he believed to lie in wait for him. And it seemed to her now that it was time to be up and doing for his sake.

One night the three young people were sitting late over the fire. The keeping of late hours made one of the changes which

Katherine had introduced into the house. She loved to amuse herself a long way into the night, though the servants grumbled, and even Miss Martha was dissatisfied. The mild old lady had been obliged to yield the point. She might go to bed herself when her eyes would not keep open, but midnight often found the three young heads bent together over the fire. May on such occasions would be as merry as her guest. She would have laugh for laugh and jest for jest with Katherine; and she would not be disheartened even when she found that Paul would listen to the stranger, and would give little heed to her.

"Tell me about Tobercevil," said Katherine to Paul. "I have heard scraps of the history, but I want to know it all. There could not be a better time for an uncomfortable story."

Paul's face darkened, as he gloomily prepared to comply with her request. He went steadily through the whole of the wild tale, passing from one lean hero to another amongst his ancestors, till he finished with Simon, the present terror of the country.

"Oh, dear!" said Katherine, when he had done. "And you are the next-of-kin. Why the end of it is that you will be the richest man in Ireland."

"That is it," said Paul; "and there will not be many wealthier elsewhere. I have lately been calculating the old man's wealth. Think of the accumulation during many hundreds of years!"

He said this with his brow bent and his eyes on the fire, and a look in his face which May had never seen there before.

"What is this old man like?" asked Katherine, who had lost all her levity, and become for once grave and earnest. "Is he very old? Is he in good health? Is he likely to die soon?"

"That is as may be," said Paul, grimly. "He may live long enough unless some one interfere to help him out of the world before his time. You know it is on the cards that I, being his kinsman, may do him that good office."

"But you could never be so silly!" cried Katherine, eagerly. "You would be probably found out, and if you did escape punishment, there would still be a great deal of trouble and unpleasantness. Besides, if you are of a superstitious turn of mind, as I strongly suspect you to be, it might interfere with the enjoyment of your happiness."

"That is true," said Paul, dryly. "It is a view of the matter which I did not take before. But then—suppose I turn into a miser, and some bolder kinsman comes forward and murders me? It might be wiser to take the thing into my own hands."

"Nonsense!" said Katherine. "I forbid you to ruin yourself by anything so silly. Have a little patience, and don't believe in bogies. The old man will die, and you will get possession of all the wealth. You will leave this mouldy place, and become a great man in England, where taste and money are appreciated. You are cultivated and accomplished. You can have your will of all the good things of the world. You may marry the handsomest woman of your time—but, oh, I forgot! I beg your pardon!" and Katharine glanced at May, and laughed in make-believe confusion.

But May was bravely at her post, and out-laughed her.

"Go on, please," she said, blithely. "Go on and finish the story. We must let nothing interfere with the hero's grandeur. You must wed him to a princess—unless, indeed, you can find an unmarried queen. You are bound not to stop until you have placed him on a throne."

"I am bound to no such thing!" said Katherine, pettishly. "And he shall not go on a throne, for kings are wretched creatures."

"Well," said May, "that does not prove that your hero may not be a king. You have not done anything for him yet to prevent his being a very wretched creature. But all I say is this, that I hope he will be allowed to look after his poor subjects in these parts. There is a long account due to them from the forefathers of his majesty. We will include the settling of this amongst the pleasures you have mentioned."

Katherine laughed a cynical laugh. "No, indeed!" she said, "no such thing! My hero shall send Tobercevil to the hammer. He shall fly from this land of beggars and of bogs. He shall revel in his inheritance, not squander it for nothing."

"We talk about 'my hero,' and 'my hero,'" said May, smilingly, "but the heir of Tobercevil must declare for himself. Let him speak and say if he will turn his back upon his people."

Both bright pairs of eyes were turned on Paul, May's with more eagerness and anxiety lurking in them than their owner cared that they should betray. Paul grew troubled and embarrassed under their gaze.

"I don't know," he said; "I am not prepared to declare. But I am not sure that the wisest plan for the future master of Tobereevil would not be to get rid of the whole thing, and leave the curse and the woods to rot or flourish as they please."

May grew pale, but she answered readily, before Katherine had time to speak.

"Well, there will be time enough to decide when the right moment comes. In the meanwhile, is it not time that this meeting should break up?"

And the meeting did break up. Katherine had achieved triumph enough to last her for one night, and went singing down the cloisters to her chamber. She sang her light song while she unbound her golden hair and put off her jewels, and her laces, and her gown of glittering silk. And she fell asleep, smiling, and dreamt that May was weeping at her door, but she would not let her in. Yet May was not weeping; only lying awake in pain, with wide-open eyes, and fiercely-throbbing heart; for tears could not save Paul, however strength and courage might.

All the courage was needed, and needed yet more urgently as days and weeks went on. The change in Paul became more marked, and Katherine's subtle power gathered closer round him, while her cunning boldness kept him further out of the reach of May's wholesome influence. Her conversation ran upon money and power, upon the folly of a man's not enjoying whatever he could touch, upon the uselessness of so-called benevolent endeavours to do good to one's fellow-creatures, and every hour Paul showed a more restless impatience to possess the inheritance which the miser had promised should be his. His temper was altered; every flickering shadow had become a sombre cloud, every gleam of his old good humour appeared only under the guise of a feverish hilarity. Katherine amused him with stories of the gay world where people did what they pleased without trouble about duty, and in perfect freedom from the thraldom of what stupid people call conscience. She showed him that life in such a dreary corner of the world as this was no better than that of the mole in the earth, that gaiety, and excitement, and luxury were the only things that made existence worth having. And when Katherine talked she drove out the devil of gloom that tormented his soul; but only that when she had ceased seven others might enter in and take possession of it: while May became like some pale spirit hovering on the threshold of this dwelling which had been her own, and kept aloof by the demons that had driven her out.

It had taken three strange months to bring things to this point, and one bleak day in March Katherine took a fancy to walk out by herself, away from Monasterlea, and towards the Woods of Tobereevil. It was a gray morning, with a cold and scathing wind, but Katherine was healthy and strong, and clad so as to defy the bitter weather. She was all wrapped up in furs, and carried a gay hat and feathers upon her head. As she walked along the road people curtsied to her, and looked after her, for her beauty shone dazzlingly in the chill of the colourless day.

It seemed to amuse her to be out thus alone, and on an errand of her own, for she laughed pleasantly to herself as she went along. She sometimes looked behind her, but she did not stop at all till she had come to the entrance of the Tobereevil Woods. Then she stood still and gazed at them. Katherine Archbold had not the least share of superstition or of poetry in her nature, yet her mind as she gazed at the trees was filled with the recollection of the story of their origin. But she had no shudder for the cruelty of the wholesale murder that had driven their roots into the soil. She was not troubled about freezing mothers and babes, and famished men. She thought only of the success of these strong woods which had so forced their roots into the sad reluctant land, covering many a mile with their mighty limbs. She had a vast admiration for anything that had triumphed, and she gloried in the triumph of the trees.

Having gazed her fill at them, she dived in amongst them, walking over the meek primroses, and never seeing the young violets. She plunged into the thickets, and amused herself by forcing her way through the underwood, fighting with stubborn branches that barred her way, delighted when she could break them and trample them under foot. The trees thrust her back, but she had her way, in spite of them, conveying herself into certain of their fastnesses, where human footstep seldom made its way. She found a pillared chamber of gloom, where the sun could never shine, and by the gradual spread of whose impenetrable roof the faithful light of the stars had been one by one put out. Perpetual darkness reigned

in this spot, and there was also a ceaseless sound of disturbance, for the roar of swaying miles of wood surged above and below in continual thunder. Even the mildest airs of heaven seemed to have secret stings, which goaded the Tobereevil Woods unceasingly into motion and sound. The darkness and confusion were very awful in this solitary dungeon which the trees had made for themselves. It seemed like a meeting-place for evil spirits. Katherine approved of it, and, in order to enjoy herself, took her seat on a fallen trunk over which she had stumbled.

CHAPTER XXX. TWO CONGENIAL SOULS.

KATHERINE had not been long in this uncomfortable spot when she heard a sound which, fearless as she was, caused her a momentary shock. To hear a footstep in such a place was startling. Yet there was a crackling of the underwood to be detected through, or rather on the surface of, the roar of the woods. Her eyes, being now used to the darkness, distinguished the outline of a woman's form, which was groping its way amongst the bushes. Presently a scream from the new-comer announced fear at the glimmer of Miss Archbold's white furs. The figure fell and cowered on the ground, and Katherine amused herself for some minutes with the terror of this unknown and silly wretch. Then she touched the prostrate body with the toe of her little boot.

"Get up quickly," she said, "whoever you may be!"

The creature, an old woman, revived at the human voice, and gathered herself grotesquely into a sitting posture. They could see each other now, however dimly. Katherine looked like some beautiful fairy, who had chosen for no good end to pay a visit to this spot; the other like some witch in her familiar haunt. For the old woman was ugly, and she was weird. In short, she was Tibbie.

"I know ye now!" she cried, "I know ye now! Ye're Sir John Archbold's daughter from beyant the mountain. Many a time I have heard o' the beauty o' yer face, an' the hardness o' yer heart. I know ye by yer hair, for though my eyes is not good, I can see the glint o't. I took ye for an angel, an' I'm not good company for the angels—not till my boy Con's someway settled to his property. When Simon gives him his rights, then I'll set my mind to goodness; but people can't get their wills wid the grace o' God about them. An' I'm bound to get my will whosomedever lends me a hand."

"Come," said Katherine, "this is interesting. My dear wise woman, I thank you for your compliments, and I am delighted to make your acquaintance. You thought you had something good, and you find you have something naughty; so you become quite friendly and tell me your secrets. Nothing could please me more. It gives me intense pleasure to meet with people who intend to have their will. And who is your boy Con—and what is he to Simon?"

She knew the story well, but chose to hear it from Tibbie.

"He's my sister's own son, an' Simon's nephew," she said. "An' I've swore an oath on my knees that he shall be master o' Tobeerevil. There was a will that was nearly signed whin Paul Finiston he cut in an' turned us out o' doors. I've been years starvin' yonder wid the black-beetles an' the rats; an' I'm bound to have my reward. I'll get back to his kitchen, an' I'll put my boy into Paul's shoes. I've been begging on the hills, but it's little I'll think o' that when I've the money-bags in my clutches, an' I'm come this ways through the woods in hopes o' meetin' somethin' wicked that 'd help me. There do be devils an' bad spirits always livin' in the threes—I'm not afraid o' them if they'd give me a han'. But I'm mortial feared o' the angels, for they might keep me from my will."

Katherine looked at the creature with admiration. Where in all the land could she meet with anything so congenial as this hag, who had thus avowed a purpose which had made them enemies at once? "For I," thought Katherine, "have determined that Paul Finiston shall be master of Tobereevil, and I am resolved to have my will. And this creature is also bent upon forcing fate, so that her Con shall take his place. Yet we shall be friends, in spite of this little difference."

"My dear soul," said she, "sit down on this stump and tell me all about it. I am anxious to hear your plans. What do you mean to do in order to ruin Paul Finiston?"

"I would not tell you," said Tibbie, "only that I know you are hard-hearted. If I thought you soft an' good, I wouldn't open my lips to ye, not if ye prayed me on yer knees. For Paul Finiston's the sort that women likes."

"But he is a fool," said Katherine, "an impostor, and a beggar, who must be turned by the shoulders out of the country."

Tibbie crowed, and clapped her hands

with delight. "Oh, musha!" she cried; "you have the purty tongue in your head."

"How do you mean to do it?" asked Katherine. "Don't be afraid to tell me, for there is no one within miles of us. Shall you give him a taste of nightshade, or a little hemlock-tea?"

"No," said Tibbie, doubtfully, as if the idea had not startled her, but was familiar to her mind. "I have thought o' that, an' thought o't, an' I'll thry another way. I'll do it by a charm. An' that's what brought me here to-day. There's roots that does be growin' in divils' places like this, an' if ye can catch them, an' keep them, ye may do anything ye like."

"Roots!" said Katherine. "And what do you do with them?"

"Some needs wan doin', an' some another," said Tibbie. "The best of all is a mandhrake, for that's a divil in itsel'. It looks like a little man, and ye hang it up in a corner, where it can see ye walkin' about. So long as you threat it well it'll bring ye the luck o' the world. I go sarchin' through every bad place in the woods, and on the mountains, turnin' up the stones, and glowerin' under the bushes, hopin' to find a mandhrake that'll do my will. If I can find him, oh, honey! won't I make my own o' the miser? I'll make the keys dance out o' his pockets, and the money-bags dance out o' the holes he has hid them in, an' the goold jump out o' the bags into Tibbie's pockets. I'll make him burn the will that has Paul in it, an' write out another that'll put Con in his place. I'll have all my own way; an' the ould villain may break his heart and die widout me needin' to lift a hand against him."

"Capital," cried Katherine; "but where will you find the mandrake? Are you sure that it grows in this country at all? And suppose it does, don't you know that to suit your purpose it must spring from a murderer's grave? Then, even when it is found, there is danger in getting possession of it. It screams when its root is torn from the earth, and the shriek kills the person who plucks it."

Tibbie's face fell as she listened. "You're larnder nor me," she said. "An' are ye tellin' me the thruth?"

"Certainly, the truth," said Katherine.

Tibbie lifted up her voice and howled with disappointment. "Everythin's agin me," she said, rocking herself dismally. "But I'm not goin' to be baffled. I'll cross the says if ye'll tell me the counthry where it'll be found. I'll get somebody to pluck it for me that'll not know the harm. For I tell ye that I am bound to get my will."

Katherine stood looking on, while the old creature thus bemoaned herself.

"There, now," she said, presently, "do not cry any more. I have a mandrake myself, and I will give it to you. It will be no loss to me, for I have everything I want. I like meeting with difficulties, for I have power within myself to break them down. If you like to have the mandrake, I will give it to you."

"Like it!" cried Tibbie. "Is it would I like it, she says? Oh, wirra, wirra! isn't her ladyship gone mad? Like to have the mandrake! Like to get my will! An' they said ye were hard-hearted. Then it's soft-hearted ye are, an' I was a fool to be talkin' to ye. Give away yer luck to wan like me! If I had it I'd see ye die afore I'd give it to ye."

"Oh, very well," said Katherine, turning away. "Of course, if you don't want it, I can give it to some one else."

Tibbie uttered a cry. She fell on the ground, and laid hold of Katherine's gown. "Ladyship, ladyship!" she said. "I meant no harm. It's on'y amazed I was, an' I ax yer honour's pardon. Give me up the mandhrake, an' ye may put yer foot on me, an' walk on me. I'll do anythin' in the world for ye when I have a divil to do my will. Ladyship, ladyship, give me the mandhrake!"

"There, then," said Katherine, "I promise that you shall have it; and if ever I should want anything of you I expect you to be friendly. Stay, there is one thing I should like—to see the house of Tobereevil. Bring me there, now, and you shall have the mandrake to-morrow. I don't want to see the miser; only his den."

"Well," said Tibbie, who had now got on her feet, and recovered her self-possession, "if you can creep, an' hould yer tongue, an' if yer shoes don't squeak, I'll take ye through the place. There's little worth seein' for a lady like yersel', but come wid me if you like it. On'y don't blame Tibbie if Simon finds ye out."

"Leave that to me," said Katherine, "I'm not afraid of Simon."

Tibbie clasped her hands and rocked herself with delight. "That's the mandhrake," she muttered. "There's nobody can gainsay her wid the mandhrake undher her thumb; an to-morrow it'll be Tibbie's."

So these new friends set to work to

extricate themselves from the prison of trees in which they had taken pains to immure themselves. They groped, and pushed, and fought, until they made their way out into the more open woods where air and moisture were found plentiful enough, and where the young vegetation was varied and magnificent, the delicate and wholesome growing mingled with the rank and poisonous. Ivy trailed from high branches of trees, making beautiful traps for unwary feet. Grass was long and coarse, being nourished with the giant ferns by creeping sources of the evil well of the legend. Streaks of fiery scarlet shining out here and there from the gloom of greenery, and blackish atmosphere of rotting thickets, announced the brazen beauty of the night-shade. Upon this Katherine pounced, making herself a deathly and brilliant nosegay as she went along; a poisonous sheaf of burning berries for a centre, some stalks of hemlock, some little brown half-rotted nutleaves with blots of yellow and crimson, some black slender twigs; the whole surrounded by a lacework of skeleton oak-leaves. She would have nothing fresh, nothing of the spring, her whim being to make a nosegay out of deadliness and decay.

THE "SUPER."

THE theatrical supernumerary—or the "super," as he is familiarly called—is a man who in his time certainly plays many parts, and yet obtains applause in none. His exits and his entrances, his début and his disappearance, alike escape criticism and record. His name is not printed in the playbills, and is for ever unknown to his audience. Even the persons he is supposed to represent upon the stage always remain anonymous. Both as a living and fictitious creature he is denied individuality, and has to be considered collectively, massed with others, and inseparable from his companion figures. He is not so much an actor, as part of the decorations, the animated furniture, so to say, of the stage. Nevertheless, "supers" have their importance and value. For how could the drama exist without its background groups: its soldiers, citizens, peasants, courtiers, nobles, guests, and attendants of all kinds? These give prominence, support, and effect to the leading characters of the theatre; and these are the "supers."

Upon the French stage the minor assistants of the scene are comprehensively described as les choristes. In this way the pedigree of the "super" gains something of nobility, and may, perhaps, be traced back to the chorus of the antique drama, a body charged with most momentous duties, with symbolic mysteries of dance and song, removed from the perils and catastrophes of the play, yet required in regard to these to guide and interpret the sympathies of the spectators. In its modern application, however, this generic term has its subdivisions, and includes les choristes proper, who boast musical attainments, and are obedient to the rule of a chef d'attaque, or head chorister; les accessoires, performers permitted speech of a brief kind, who can be intrusted upon occasion with such simple functions as opening a door, placing a chair, or delivering a letter, and who correspond in many respects with our actors of utility; les figurants, the subordinate dancers led by a coryphée; and lastly, les comparses, who closely resemble our supernumeraries, and are engaged in more or less numbers, according to the exigencies of the representation. Of these aids to performance les comparses only enjoy no regular salaries, are not formally enrolled among the permanent members of the establishment, but are paid simply for appearing—seventy-five centimes for the night and fifty centimes for each rehearsal—or upon some such modest scale of remuneration. This classification would appear to afford opportunities to ambition. Here are steps in the ladder, and merit should be able to ascend. It is understood, however, that as a rule les comparses do not rise. They are the serfs of the stage, who never obtain manumission. They are as conscripts, from whose knapsacks the field-marshal's baton is almost invariably omitted. They become veterans, but their length of service receives no favourable recognition. Comparses they live and comparses they die, or disappear, not apparently discontented with their doom; however. Meantime the figurant cherishes sanguine hopes that he may one day rise to a prominent position in the ballet, or that he may become an accessoire; and the accessoire looks forward fervently to ranking in the future among the regular actors or artistes of the theatre, with the right of entering its grand foyer, or superior green-room. Until then he must confine himself and his aspirations to the petit foyer set apart for the use of players of his class.

Thus it is told of a certain accessoire of

the Porte St. Martin, in years past, who had won a scarcely appreciable measure of fame for his adroitness in handing letters or coffee-cups upon a salver, and even for the propriety with which he announced, in the part of a footman, the guests and visitors of a drama—such as "Monsieur le Viscomte de St. Remy!" or "Madame la Marquise de Roncourt!"—that he applied to his manager for an increase of his salary on account of the special value of his services. "I do not expect," he frankly said, "immediately to receive twenty-five thousand francs, as Monsieur Frédéric Lemaitre does; no, not yet; although I bear in mind that Monsieur Lemaitre began his career with fighting broad-sword combats in Madame Saqui's circus; but my present salary is but six hundred francs a year, and a slight increase——"

"Monsieur Fombonne," interrupted the manager, "I acknowledge the justice of your application. I admire and esteem you. You are one of the most useful members of my company. I well know your worth; no one better."

Monsieur Fombonne, glowing with pleasure, bowed in his best manner.

"I may venture to hope then——"

"By all means, Monsieur Fombonne. Hope sustains us under all our afflictions. Always hope. For my part hope is the only thing left me. Business is wretched. The treasury is empty. I cannot possibly raise your salary. But you are an artist, and therefore above pecuniary considerations. I do not—I cannot—offer you money. But I can gratify a laudable ambition. Hitherto you have ranked only as an accessoire; from this time forward you are an actor. I give you the right of entering the grand foyer. You are permitted to call Monsieur Lemaitre mon camarade; to tutoyer Mademoiselle Theodorine. I am sure, Monsieur Fombonne, that you will thoroughly appreciate the distinction I have conferred upon you."

Monsieur Fombonne was delighted. He was subsequently to discover, however, that some disadvantages attended his new dignity; that the medal he had won had its reverse. The accessoires and figurants of the theatre always received their salaries on the first day of each month. The artistes were not paid until the sixth or seventh day. Monsieur Fombonne had to live upon credit for a week as the price of his new privileges. His gain was shadowy; his loss substantial.

With the choristes proper we are not here much concerned. They are not fairly to be classed among "supers," and they pertain almost exclusively to the lyric stage. It is to be noted, however, that they are in some sort evidence of the connexion that once existed between the Church and the Theatre; the ecclesiastical and the laical drama. At any rate, the chorus singers often undertake divided duties in this respect, and accept engagements both at the cathedral and the opera-house. And sometimes it has happened that the discharge of their dual obligations has involved them in serious difficulties. Thus, some years since, there is said to have been a Christmas spectacle in preparation at the opera-house in Paris. The entertainment was of a long and elaborate kind, and for its perfect production numberless rehearsals, early and late, dress and undress, were imperatively necessary. Now the chorus of the opera also represented the choir of Notre Dame. It was a season of the year for which the Church has appointed many celebrations. The singers were incessantly running to and fro between the opera-house and Notre Dame. Often they had not a moment to spare, and punctuality in attending their appointments was scarcely possible, while the trouble of so frequently changing their costumes was extremely irksome to them. On one occasion a dress rehearsal at the theatre, which commenced at a very late hour, after the conclusion of the ordinary performance of the evening, was so protracted that the time for the early service at the cathedral was rapidly approaching. The chorus appeared as demons at the opera, and wore the tight-fitting scaly dresses which time out of mind have been invested upon the stage with diabolical attributes. What were they to do? Was there time to undress and dress again? Scarcely. Besides, was it worth the trouble? It was very dark; bitterly cold; there was not a soul to be seen in the streets; all Paris was abed and asleep. Moreover, the door of the sacristy would be ready open to receive them, and their white stoles would be immediately obtainable. Well, the story goes that these desperate singers, accoutred as they were, ran as fast as they could to Notre Dame, veiled their satanic dresses beneath the snowy surplices of the choir, and accomplished their sacred duties without any discovery of the impropriety of their conduct. It is true they encountered in their course a patrol of the civic guard; but the representatives of law and order, form-

ing probably their own conclusions as to the significance of the demoniac apparition, are said to have prudently taken to flight in an opposite direction.

Upon our early English stage the "super" had frequent occupation; the Shakesperian drama, indeed, makes large demands upon the mute performers. The stage at this time was not very spacious, however, and was in part occupied by the more pretentious of the spectators, who, seated upon stools, or reclining upon the rushes which strewed the boards, were attended by their pages, and amused themselves with smoking their pipes and noisily criticising the performance. There was little room therefore for any great number of supernumeraries. But spectacles—to which the "super" has always been indispensable—had already won the favour of playgoers. Sir Henry Wotton writes in 1613 of a new play produced at the Globe Theatre, "called All is True, representing some principal pieces of the reign of Henry the Eighth, which was set forth with many extraordinary circumstances of pomp and majesty, even to matting of the stage; the knights of the order with their Georges and Garter, the guards with their embroidered coats and the like; sufficient, in truth, within a while to make greatness very familiar, if not ridiculous." "Supers" must surely have been employed on this occasion. It is clear, however, that the money-takers, "or gatherers," as they were called, after the audience had assembled, and their presence was no longer needed at the doors, were accustomed to appear upon the stage as the representatives of guards, soldiers, &c. An early play refers to the combats of the scene being accomplished by "the blue-coated stage-keepers," or attendants. And the actors were classified at this time, according to their professional standing, as "whole sharers," "three-quarter sharers," "half sharers," and "hired men," or "servitors." The leading players were as joint proprietors in the undertaking, and divided the receipts among them according to a prearranged scale. Minor characters were sustained by the "servitors" who were paid, as our actors are at the present time, by weekly wages, and had no other interest in the success of the theatre with which they were associated, beyond desire that its exchequer might be always equal to their claims upon it. Philip Henslowe's Diary contains an entry regarding a non-sharing actor: "Hiered as a covenant servant Willyam Kendall—to give him for his said servis everi week of his playing in London ten shillings, and in the countrie five shillings, for the which he covenaunteth to be redye at all houres to play in the house of the said Philip, and in no other." It may be noted that Shakespeare's first connexion with the Globe Theatre is shown upon fair evidence to have been originally that of a "servitor." In that case the poet must often have been required to appear in very subordinate characters—perhaps even characters not intrusted with speech. Will it inflame too violently the ambition of our modern "supers" to suggest to them that very possibly Shakespeare himself may have preceded them in the performance of their somewhat inglorious duties? The hired men or servitors were under the control and in the pay of the proprietor or manager of the theatre, and their salaries constituted no charge upon the shares of the chief actors. Still these were entitled to complain apparently if the hired men were too few in number to give due effect to the representations. In 1614 a dispute arose between Henslowe and his sharing actors, by reason of his having suddenly reduced his expenses by dismissing "four hired men." He had previously sought to charge their stipends upon the shares, although bound by agreement to defray these expenses out of the money derived from the galleries, at this time, perhaps, a managerial perquisite. But in addition to the servitors, as the representatives of minor and mute characters, there were also available the journeymen or apprentices of the more eminent performers. If they paid no premium upon being articled, novices were at any rate bound in return for the education they received to hand their earnings, or a large part of them, to their masters. And this is precisely the case at the present time in regard to the pupils of musical professors and the teachers of singing, dancing, and feats of the circus. The services of the apprentices were transferable, and could be bought and sold. There is quite a slave-trade aspect about the following entry in Henslowe's Diary. "Bowght my boye Jeames Brystow, of William Augusten, player, the 8th of December, 1597, for eight pounds." Augustine Phillips, the actor, one of Shakespeare's partners, who died in 1605, and who by his will bequeathed to Shakespeare "a thirty shillings peece in gould," also gave to "Samuell Gilborne, my late apprentice, the some of

fortye shillings, and my mouse-coloured velvit hose, and a white taffety dublet, a blacke taffety sute, my purple cloke, sword and dagger, and my base viall." He also gave to "James Sands, my apprentice, the some of forty shillings and a citterne, a bandore, and a lute, to be paid and delivered unto him at the expiration of his terme of yeres in his indentur of apprenticehood." From his bequest of musical instruments, it has been conjectured that Phillips sometimes played in what is now called the orchestra of the theatre. A sum of forty shillings in Elizabeth's time represents the value of about ten pounds of our currency. What with its "gatherers," "servitors," and journeymen, the Shakespearian stage was obviously provided sufficiently with supernumerary assistants.

The "super" is useful, even ornamental in his way, though it behoves him always to stand aloof from the footlights, so that distance may lend his aspect as much enchantment as possible; but he is not highly esteemed by the general public. In truth he has been long the object of ridicule and caricature. He is charged with stupidity, and is popularly considered as a very absurd sort of creature. But he has resigned his own volition, he has but to obey. He is as a puppet whose wires are pulled by others. He is under the rule of a "supermaster," who is in his turn governed by the wavings of the prompter's white flag in the wings, the prompter being controlled by the stage-manager, who is supposed to be the executant of the dramatist's intentions. The "super's" position upon the stage is strictly defined for him; sometimes even marked on the boards with chalk. He may not move until the word of command is given him, and then every change of station or attitude must be pursuant to previous instruction. And his duties are sometimes arduous. He may often be required to change his attire and assume a new personality in the course of one night's performances. A member of a band of brigands in one scene, he may in another be enrolled in a troop of soldiers, sent to combat with and capture those malefactors. In the same play he may wear now the robes of a nobleman, and now the rags of a mendicant. A demon possessed of supernatural powers at the opening of a pantomime, he is certain before its close to be found among those good-natured people who saunter across the stage for the sole purpose, as it would seem, of being assaulted and battered by the clown and pantaloon. It is not surprising altogether that a certain apathy gradually steals over him, and that such intelligence as he ever possessed becomes in time somewhat numbed by the peculiar nature of his profession. Moreover, in regard to the play in which he takes part he is generally but dimly informed. Its plot and purpose are a mystery to him. He never sees it represented or rehearsed as an entirety. His own simple duties accomplished, he is hurried to the rear of the stage to be out of the way of the actors. Why he bends his knee to one performer and loads another with fetters; why there is banning in this scene and blessing in that; why the heroine in white adores the gallant in blue and abominates her suitor in red, are to him inexplicable matters. The dramas in which he figures only impress his mind in relation to the dresses he is constrained to assume during their representation, the dresses being never of his own choosing, rarely fitting him, and their significance being always outside his comprehension. To him the tragedy of King John is but the occasion on which he and his fellows "wore them tin pots on our 'eads;" Julius Cæsar the play in which "we went on in sheets." "What are we supposed to be?" a curious "super" once inquired of a more experienced comrade. "Blessed if I know," was the answer. "Demons I expect." They were clothing themselves in chain-mail, and were "supposed to be"—Crusaders.

The "super's" dress is, indeed, his prime consideration, and out of it arises his greatest grievance. He must surrender himself unconditionally to the costumier, and obey implicity his behests. Summer or winter, he has no voice in the question; he must clothe himself warmly or scantily, just as he is bidden. "Always fleshings when there's a frost," a "super" was once heard to grumble, who conceived the classical system of dress or undress—and for that matter, perhaps, the classical drama also—to be invented solely for his inconvenience and discomfort. But more trying than this antique garb is the demoniac mask of pantomime, which is as a diver's helmet ill provided with appliances for admitting air or permitting out-look. The group of panting "supers," with their mimic heads under their arms—their faces smeared with red or blue, in accordance with direction, not of their own choice—to be discovered behind the scenes during the performance of a Christmas piece, is an impressive portion

of the spectacle, although it is withheld from the contemplation of the audience. There have been "supers" who approached very near to death by suffocation, from the hurtful nature of their attire, rather than fail in the discharge of their duties. For there is heroism everywhere.

The stage has always been fertile in the matter of anecdotage, and of course comical stories of "supers" have abounded; for these, the poorest of players, are readily available for facetious purposes. Thus, so far back as the days of Quin, there is record of a curious misapprehension on the part of the supernumeraries of the time. Quin's pronunciation was of a broad old-fashioned kind, a following of a traditional method of elocution from which Garrick did much to release the theatre. The play was Thomson's Coriolanus, and Quin appeared as the hero. In the scene of the Roman ladies' entry in procession, to solicit the return to Rome of Coriolanus, the stage was filled with tribunes and centurions of the Volscian army, bearing fasces, their ensigns of authority. Quin, as the hero, commanded them to "lower their fasces" by way of homage to the matrons of Rome. But the representatives of the centurions understood him to mean their *faces*, and much to the amusement of the audience all reverently bowed their heads with absurd unanimity.

But it is as the performers of "guests" that the "supers" have especially moved derision in our theatres; and, indeed, on the Parisian stage les invités have long been established provocatives of laughter. The assumption of evening dress and something of the manners of polite society, has always been severely trying to the supernumerary actor. What can he really know of balls and fashionable assemblies? Of course, speech is not demanded of him, nor is his presence needed very near to the proscenium, but he is required to give animation to the background, and to be as easy and graceful as he may in his aspect and movements. The result is not satisfactory. He is more at home in less refined situations. He is prone to indulge in rather grotesque gestures, expressive of admiration of the brilliant decorations surrounding him, and profuse, even servile gratitude for the hospitality extended to him. He interchanges mute remarks, enlivened by surprising grimaces, with the lady of the ballet, in the shabbiest of ball dresses, who hangs affectionately upon his arm. The limited amount of his stipend naturally asserts itself in his costume, which will not bear critical investigation. His boots are of the homeliest and sometimes of the muddiest; course dabs of rouge appear upon his battered cheeks; his wig—for a "super" of this class almost always wears a wig—is unkempt and decayed; his white cravat has a burlesque air; and his gloves are of cotton. There are even stories extant of very economical "supers" who have gone halves in a pair of "berlins," and even expended rouge on but one side of their faces, pleading that they were required to stand only on the right or the left of the stage, as the case might be, and as they could thus be seen but in profile by the audience, these defects in their appearance could not possibly attract notice. Altogether the "super's" least effective performance is that of "a guest."

It is a real advance for a "super" when he is charged with some small theatrical task, which removes him from the ranks of his fellows. He acquires individuality, though of an inferior kind. But his promotion entails responsibilities for which he is not always prepared. Lekain, the French tragedian, playing the part of Tancred, at Bordeaux, required a supernumerary to act as his squire, and carry his helmet, lance, and shield. Lekain's personal appearance was insignificant, and his manner at rehearsal had been very subdued. The "super" thought little of the hero he was to serve, and deemed his own duties slight enough. But at night Lekain's majesty of port, and the commanding tone in which he cried, "Suivez moi!" to his squire, so startled and overcame that attendant that he suddenly let fall, with a great crash, the weapons and armour he was carrying. Something of the same kind has often happened upon our own stage. "You distressed me very much, sir," said a famous tragedian once to a "super," who had committed default in some important business of the scene. "Not more than you frightened me, sir," the "super" frankly said. He was forgiven his failure on account of the homage it conveyed to the tragedian's impressiveness.

M. Etienne Arago, writing some years since upon les choristes, calls attention to the important services rendered to the stage by its mute performers, and demands their wider recognition. He holds that as much, or even more talent is necessary to constitute a tolerable figurant as to make a good actor. He describes the figurant

as a multiform actor, a dramatic chameleon, compelled by the special nature of his occupation, or rather by its lack of special nature, to appear young or old, crooked or straight, noble or base-born, savage or civilized, according to the good pleasure of the dramatist. "Thus, when Tancred declaims, 'Toi superbe Orbassan, c'est toi que je défie!' and flings his gauntlet upon the stage, Orbassan has but to wave his hand and an attendant advances boldly, stoops, picks up the gage of battle, and resumes his former position. That is thought to be a very simple duty. But to accomplish it without provoking the mirth of the audience is le sublime du métier—le triomphe de l'art!"

The emotions of an author who for the first time sees himself in print, have often been descanted upon. The sensations of a "super," raised from the ranks, intrusted with the utterance of a few words, and enabled to read the entry of his own name in the playbills, are scarcely less entitled to sympathy. His task may be slight enough, the measure of speech permitted him most limited; the reference to him in the programmes may simply run—

CHARLES (a waiter) . . Mr. JONES;

or even

RAILWAY PORTER . . . Mr. BROWN;

but the delight of the performer is infinite. His promotion is indeed of a prodigious kind. Hitherto but a lay-figure, he is now endowed with life. He has become an actor! The world is at length informed of his existence. He has emerged from the crowd, and though it may be but for a moment, can assert his individuality. He carries his part about with him everywhere—it is but a slip of paper with one line of writing running across it. He exhibits it boastfully to his friends. He reads it again and again; recites it in every tone of voice he can command—practises his elocutionary powers upon every possible occasion. A Parisian figurant, advanced to the position of accessoire, was so elated that he is said to have expressed surprise that the people he met in the streets did not bow to him; that the sentinels on guard did not present arms as he passed. His reverence for the author in whose play he is to appear is boundless; he regards him as a second Shakespeare, if not something more. His devotion to the manager, who has given him the part, for a time approaches deliriousness.

"*Our* new play will be a great go!" a promoted "super" once observed to certain of his fellows. "*I* play a policeman! I go on in the last scene, and handcuff Mr. Rant. I have to say, 'Murder's the charge! Stand back!' Won't that *fetch* the house?"

There are soldiers doomed to perish in their first battle. And there have been "supers" who have failed to justify their advancement, and silenced for ever have had to fall back into the ranks again. The French stage has a story of a figurant who ruined at once a new tragedy and his own prospects by an unhappy lapsus linguæ, the result of undue haste and nervous excitement. He had but to cry, aloud, in the crisis of the drama: "Le roi se meurt!" He was perfect at rehearsal; he earned the applause even of the author. A brilliant future, as he deemed, was open to him. But at night he could only utter, in broken tones, "Le meurt se roi!" and the tragic situation was dissolved in laughter. So, in our own theatre, there is the established legend of Delpini, the Italian clown, who, charged to exclaim at a critical moment, "Pluck them asunder!" could produce no more intelligible speech than "Massonder em plocket!" Much mirth in the house and dismay on the stage ensued. But Delpini had gained his object. He had become qualified as an actor to participate in the benefits of the Theatrical Fund. As a mere pantomimist he was without a title. But John Kemble had kindly furthered the claim of the foreign clown by intrusting him for once with "a speaking part." The tragedian, however, had been quite unprepared for the misadventure that was to result.

Delpini was, it appears, doomed to mortification in regard to his attempts at English speech upon the stage. He was engaged as clown at the East London, or Royalty Theatre, in Goodman's Fields, at a time when that establishment was without a license for dramatic performances, and was incurring the bitter hostility of the patent managers. It was understood, however, that musical and pantomimic entertainments could lawfully be presented. But the unhappy clown, in the course of a harlequinade, had ventured to utter the simple words, "Roast Beef!" and forthwith he was prosecuted and sent to prison as a rogue and a vagabond. For a time he seems to have been even reduced to prison fare. His case is referred to in a prologue written by Miles Peter Andrews, and delivered upon

the occasion of a benefit, when the performances not being for "gain, hire, or reward," were held to be permissible. The address was a kind of dialogue, spoken by Mrs. Hudson and Mrs. Gibbs, in the characters of Melpomene and Thalia.

"Well, friends, we both are come your hands to kiss,
The tragic lady and the comic miss;
But should we both attempt to keep possession
Warrants may be issued from the Quarter Session:
For tho' alone, our tongues may be untied well
A dialogue will send us both to Bridewell:
Think of our danger should we meet again
The informing carpenter of Drury Lane;
Danger so dire it staggers all belief,
Water and bread, for calling out 'Roast Beef!'"

It used to be said that at the Parisian Cirque, once famous for its battle pieces, refractory "supers" were always punished by being required to represent "the enemy" of the evening: the Russians, Prussians, English, or Arabs, as the case might be—who were to be overcome by the victorious soldiers of France—repulsed at the point of the bayonet, trampled upon and routed in a variety of ignominious ways. The representatives of "the enemy" complained that they could not endure to be hopelessly beaten night after night. Their expostulation was unpatriotic; but it was natural. For "supers" have their feelings, moral as well as physical. At one of our own theatres a roulette table was introduced in a scene portraying the salon at Homburg, or Baden-Baden. Certain of the "supers" petitioned that they should not always appear as the losing gamesters. They desired sometimes to figure among the winners. It need hardly be said that the money that changed hands upon the occasion was only of that valueless kind that has no sort of currency off the stage.

When "supers" appear as modern soldiers in action, it is found advisable to load their guns for them. They fear the "kick" of their weapons, and will, if possible, avoid firing them. Once in a military play a troop of grenadiers were required to fire a volley. Their officer waved his sword and gave the word of command superbly; but no sound followed, save only that of the snapping of locks. Not a gun had been loaded. An unfortunate unanimity had prevailed among the grenadiers. Each had forborne to load his weapon, trusting that his omission would escape notice in the general noise, and assured that a shot more or less could be of little consequence. It had occurred to no one of them that his scheme might be put into operation by others beside himself—still less that the whole band might adopt it. But this had happened. For the future their guns were given them loaded.

LOST HOURS.

It was a mournful watch she kept,
In the soundless winter night,
While all her world around her slept,
And the pitiless stars shone bright;
For she saw the years in long review,
The years she had trifled past,
The years when life was bright and new,
And, what had they left at last!
And she cried, as she thought of her drooping flowers,
Her baffled hopes and her failing powers:
"Oh my lost hours!"

What a harvest might have been garnered in,
When the golden grain was wasted!
What a nectar of life it was hers to win,
When the draught was barely tasted!
What happy memories might have shone,
Had folly never stained them!
What noble heights to rest upon,
If a steadier foot had gained them!
And she cried as she sat mid her faded flowers,
"Rashness and weakness bring fatal dowers;
Oh my lost hours!"

Too late for battle, too late for fame,
Comes the vision of better life.
With eyes that are burning with tears of shame
She looks on the world's keen strife;
The patient love cannot pardon now,
Or the fond believing cheer.
Where the white cross stands and the violets blow,
Lie the loved that made life so dear.
Kind nature renews her perished flowers,
But death recks nothing of sun or showers;
Ah, for lost hours!

AMONG THE MARKETS.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

THANKS to the wholesale demolition of ancient slums, Smithfield, or Smoothfield, the ancient "campus planus," is no longer difficult of access. The narrow streets and tortuous approaches, once made dangerous to life and limb by countless herds of overdriven cattle, have disappeared, leaving in their place broad roadways and open spaces to be let for building purposes, at prices which would make even the fortunate shoddy aristocrats of Fifth Avenue stare with amazement. The old streets and time-honoured landmarks have been swept away, and the fine old English cattle-dealer, with mouth full of strange oaths and greasy pocket well lined with oleaginous country notes, has disappeared from the ancient field.

The cattle-pens are gone, and the poor goaded oxen and worried sheep have betaken themselves to Islington. Often have I wondered what became of the sorry hacks formerly sold in Smithfield. What could those poor wall-eyed, wind-galled, spavined, foundered, staggery bags of bones

be good for? For the knacker's yard? Not always. Fate was not always so kind to these poor played-out Bucephali, but granted them a short respite from the tanner, the glue-maker, and the cat's-meat man, only that the last glimmering of vitality might be driven out of their wretched carcasses—that they might literally die in harness. Living, some few years ago, about ten miles from London, it was my luck to be driven on a four-horse omnibus every morning to the City by an exceedingly flashy driver. Tommy Ames was a great artist in his walk, or rather drive of life; not a gentleman coachman, lifting the ribbons nearly over his head at a pull-up, but a thorough workman, keeping each individual animal up to collar, and taking every ounce out of his team. His omnibus was the shabbiest, his harness the seediest, his horses the most woebegone "hair trunks" on the road, but his pace was undeniable, beating out of sight the neat vehicles and well-fed animals of the opposition. Much as I relished the pace, I could not help pitying the poor overworked beasts, and one day could not refrain from asking Tommy if his horses never got any rest.

"Rest," he answered, coolly, "my 'osses rest when they're dead. You see, sir, I buy 'em at Smiffle, two pun ten a head all round, and sell 'em dead for a sov. They mostly last from six weeks to two months, so my 'osses don't take much out of me. In course I picks them as has a bit o' blood in 'em, and I looks out for a wicious heye; I likes a wicious heye, I do. A 'oss as has wice in him has go in him, safe as the Bank; and temper or no temper, let me alone for putting 'em along." And the heartless Automedon put them along accordingly. Unfortunate "tits" persuaded by all-powerful whipcord to "spank" along sorely against their will! That near leader, now quivering under the lash of a vulgar 'bus driver is a thorough-bred equine aristocrat, every inch of him. The blood of the Darley Arabian, his desert-born ancestor, courses through his veins and throbs in the great heart age and ill-usage have failed to quell. The condition of those shaky fore-legs, sadly battered about the knees, was once a source of care and sleepless nights to the high and mighty ones of the land, for he was then a popular favourite for a great "event." His morning gallops, watched from afar by vigilant touts, were duly chronicled with the same loving minuteness that records the walks on the Slopes of Victoria Regina. With light, springy step, he daintily trod the "Severals" or the "Limekilns," or, with thundering hoof, spurned the broad green ribbon of the Rowley Mile.

At last came the great day when Dogstealer (by Birdcatcher—Nancy) was to prove his mettle, and carry the fortunes of that ignoble Cæsar, his owner, to victory. The vast Roodee was crammed with eager spectators, the walls of ancient Chester covered with anxious bettors clinging like flies on the steep sides of the natural amphitheatre. The favourite was the cynosure of all eyes, the observed of all, as, steered by a tiny miniature man in shining satin, he took his preliminary canter. The hour had come, and the horse; the flag fell, and Dogstealer made short work of his numerous opponents. Bearing his colours gallantly to the fore, he came away at the distance, and amid shouts of "The favourite walks in," passed the post, the winner of the Chester "Coop." He was a proud horse that day. Eyes hitherto blinded by prejudice or hoodwinked by antagonism suddenly opened to his good points. Persistent detractors who had denounced him as a fiddle-headed, slack-ribbed brute, with "too much daylight under him," sorrowfully confessed him a veritable "clinker." Bright eyes looked lovingly upon him, and small white plump hands—long to be gloved with the proceeds of his victory—applauded him enthusiastically. Flushed with victory, his owner—with whom it had been a case of "man or mouse" that day—led the beautiful animal in to weigh; the tidings of Dogstealer's feat sped far and near, while his lucky backers rubbed their hands amid the ominous silence of the ring, and drank Dogstealer's health in rivers of champagne. He did not get on so well afterwards. Defeat after defeat dimmed the glory of his scutcheon; down he went, ever lower and lower yet—to the cab, and ultimately to that lowest deep of "Smiffle." There is some comfort in reflecting that his ungrateful owner was hanged.

The Smithfield of tradition is no more. A stately building, chiefly of iron and glass, but with external facing of red brick and white stone, as if indicating the streaks of fat and lean within, is dedicated to the purpose of a metropolitan dead meat market. Light and graceful, but immensely strong iron arches, enclose a vast space furnished with material for countless Homeric banquets.

On Saturdays—when retail as well as wholesale business is done—the market presents a very animated spectacle; the spoils of slaughtered flocks and herds lie around in gigantic heaps, while busy, stalwart men hurry past, carrying barons of beef, whole sheep, and fat porkers in every direction. But the chief glory of the new meat market is in its admirable subterranean arrangements. Beneath the busy mart is an immense vault occupied by a vast cobweb of railway tracks. Hither come the trucks laden with meat from metropolitan abattoirs, or more distant Scotland. By admirable mechanical contrivances, the ponderous masses of juicy beef and fine-grained mutton are hoisted to the level of the floor above, at a notable saving of cartage, porterage, and human labour generally. The City has reason to be proud of its model market, and will probably find the two millions spent upon it turn out no unprofitable investment.

Within shot of Smithfield is the vegetable market of Farringdon, once aspiring to, and even now not despairing of a successful rivalry with Covent Garden. It is, however, although well stocked with vegetables of all sorts and sizes, from huge drumheads to doll's cabbages packed by hundreds in neat baskets, entirely devoid of the features which give to the often-described Covent Garden its never-failing interest. Sanguine people, however, hope for better times, and there is talk of rebuilding Farringdon Market altogether, and giving it every chance of success against its more favoured rival.

It is very doubtful to me whether any person not actually "located" within its precincts ever succeeded in finding his way about Leadenhall Market. Such a wonderful labyrinth surely never existed since the days of ill-used Ariadne. It would have puzzled Theseus to have found his way in and out of the innumerable alleys, courts, and passages, making up this wonderful depôt of every imaginable comestible. All kinds of creatures, furred or feathered, biped or quadruped, dead or alive, are here for sale. A square covered space is assigned to the raiment that but recently clad the lordly steer. There they lay, hides, horns and all, in quaint layers, shadowing forth the grand proportions of their once mighty proprietors, who now fill the meat market inside, where meat enough to furnish a thousand lord mayor's feasts lies heaped. Short-horned Devon, and long-horned, ruddy, curly Hereford, have been done to death to supply the roast beef of old England. Huge Leicesters and plump Southdowns elbow the tiny dainty Welsh sheep, while huge porkers look scornfully down on the meek little sucking-pigs ready for the spit, there to be roasted until their eyes drop out—the index of perfect cookery—and then to be devoured with plum-sauce, according to the dictum of the late Mr. Rush, the eminent murderer (hanged some years since at Norwich), or to be absorbed by milder mannered men with soothing apple-sauce. But the poultry market is perhaps the chief glory of Leadenhall. What regiments of geese, not green light weights, but substantial stubble-fed magnates, await their final stuffing of sage and onions and a glorious tomb in an appreciative stomach! Not regiments, but brigades, nay, whole armies of fowls, eclipse the geese in number if not in majesty, while turkeys are comparatively scarce, probably knowing their mission, and reserving their energies for Christmas. Plump pigeons, their cooing stayed for ever, vainly struggle for notice among their more majestic competitors, and are only kept in countenance by hecatombs of tiny but toothsome larks. Tenants of moor and marsh, copse and stubble, "birds of rare plume," with their once gorgeous tints now, alas! dimmed by death, hang around in rich luxuriance.

Cock-pheasants, glittering with metallic hues, are linked with their soberly clad mates. Little brown partridges, modest in their suit of humble brown, are not altogether put out of court by their meretricious French cousins, gay in their upper attire and red as to their extremities. From his heathery home on the breezy hillside comes the succulent grouse. Near him is his more stately cousin, the blackcock, boasting beneath his raven plumage three several kinds of meat, while further on hangs the great monarch of the race, the lordly capercailzie, auerhahn, or cock of the wood, saturated with the aroma of fragrant pine-buds culled in the gloomy forests of his native Norway. Plump hares, no scraggy rascals in fine training, but broad-backed fellows from Norfolk, ten and eleven pounders, doubtful as yet of their ultimate fate—the fragrant roast or the savoury jug—tiny aristocratic wild rabbits, disdaining companionship with the bloated plebeians from Ostend, await a final asphyxia at the hands of the much-abused, indispensable, tear-compelling onion. Round-breasted, plump-thighed woodcock turn up their slender bills at the neighbourhood of their

poor relation the snipe, while curly-tailed mallard, prim little teal, and juicy widgeon await the lemon and cayenne which are their inevitable fate.

But live dogs distract attention from dead game. The friend of man demands his notice with exacting bark, or insinuating whine. Huge mastiffs tug impatiently at their chains, bull-dogs—fine old conservatives these—blink sleepily through half-closed eyes at the scene, regarding the whole market, and indeed the world of these degenerate days, with ineffable scorn, as utterly gone and lost since the fine old English pastime of bull-baiting was abolished. More hopeful of the future are the sleek, wiry, graceful black-and-tan terriers; and they are in the right, for rats are not likely to become as rare as bustards for some time to come. Contemptuously sneering at the mixed society around them, supercilious pugs turn up their wrinkled noses in disdain, or lolling carelessly on their cushions look hopefully forward to the happy time when they shall exchange the atmosphere of Leadenhall for the more rarefied ether of Mayfair or Belgravia.

With sharp joyous "yap" the jovial Scotch terriers invite notice; pushing fellows these, not easily put down nor snubbed, but used to petting, to having their own way, and working their own wicked will on tassels, fringes, and other attractive odds and ends; tough little doggies too, and able, "on a pinch," to take their own part right well. It was once my privilege to number one of these dogs among my dearest friends. I have seen the little rogue run furiously up to a huge Newfoundland, seize the good-natured monster by the neck, and while swinging in the air enjoy in his doggish imagination the idea that he was giving the giant a good shaking!

Long-eared King Charles' spaniels—who appear to think that their mission in life is confined to crossing their paws and looking pretty—recline with languid, high-bred ease in dainty baskets near a brace of milk-white bull-terrier pups. Now white bull-terriers have a fatal fascination for the present writer. I have ever cherished a warm admiration for these charming animals, uniting as they do pluck, strength, fidelity, and beauty. I am not particular as to their entire whiteness, as a beauty-spot near the tail, and a brindled patch over one eye, only invest the lovely possessor with an additional charm, like a patch of court-plaister on the cheek of Belinda.

Walking one day in the market, enjoying the happy mental condition lyrically ascribed to the Jolly Young Waterman, who "rowed along thinking of nothing at all," I espied a lovely "purp" reclining in his little humble bed. He was asleep. Doubtless, in his doggish dreams visions of future greatness floated before him; whole hecatombs of rats, untimely slain, ministering to his glory, and stamping him as no unworthy scion of a noble race. He opened one eye—his left eye, adorned with a patch of brindle—and gave me a glance that went straight to my heart. We had divined each other. From that moment our interests were identical. The wary proprietor—doggiest of men—had not been unobservant of my affectionate looks. "Fine purp that, sir," he remarked in oily tones; "his father is the best bred dawg in Hingland. Maybe you've heard, sir, of Muggins's Boxer?"

Much humbled, I confessed that I had not had the advantage of numbering that renowned animal among my acquaintance. "Best dawg livin'," said my doggy friend; "has killed rats afore the royal family, and 'arf the crowned 'eds in Europe."

It dawned upon me that the owner of this canine pearl was drawing slightly on his imagination, but I was too much enchained by admiration to contradict him. I was the captive of his bow—his very long bow—and of his spear. I became the owner of the celestial pup, parting, with a sigh, with my last sovereign, as one upon whose like I might not look again for some time to come. The dog grew apace, increasing daily in beauty, and already sweet visions of an impromptu rat-pit in the back kitchen flitted across my mind, when—but why revive an unspeakable grief?—he was stolen: lost to me for ever. No treasure I could offer, and "no questions asked," sufficed to restore Nipper to my longing arms; he was gone like a lovely flower torn from its stem.

Apparently unheeding the cries of their natural enemies, whole flocks of pigeons enjoy a happy, if crowded existence. They are here of all sorts, sizes, and varieties. Slender, wattled carriers wait impatiently for the time when they shall again spread their wings, bearing to anxious men tidings of joy or sorrow, of sudden wealth or dire disaster, of battle, victory, or of death. Graceful tumblers—aërial acrobats—pent in narrow space, meek little black-hooded nuns, frilled Jacobins, vain fantails, snowy-

white in plumage, conceited pouters, puffed and swollen with a preposterous dignity, tender, softly cooing doves, and swift blue-rocks, chosen victims of the gun, divide the honours of the live poultry shops with the stately Shanghai, the fashionable Brahmapootra, and the game little Bantam. Casting a wistful glance at a fine lop-eared rabbit—a choice variety —our old friend Reynard shows his cunning vizard. Poor fellow! I warrant he would rather be leading a field of well-mounted gentlemen, riding "on a lot o' money," a merry dance over the grass counties, than be sitting here, with dry pads and mangy-looking brush.

Parrots grey, parrots green, cunning parakeets, gorgeous lories, and swinging, crested cockatoos, split the air with their screams, shrieking the praises of Pretty Poll, and demanding, with such pertinacious repetition, to be informed of the time of day, that one cannot shake off the impression that they must have important appointments to keep, and, perhaps, heavy settlements to make with the monkeys grinning and chattering opposite them.

Loquacious magpies add to the din, but do not interrupt the profound cogitations of the solemn, glossy-coated raven, who, unheeding the chatter of the thoughtless, volatile creatures around him, wraps himself in his meditations, and ponders on grave and solemn subjects far above the comprehension of the vulgar crowd. Long-billed curlews pine for a "sniff of the briny," and look curiously at plump, happy little dormice, sleek, comfortable little beasts; funny little guinea pigs nibble at their greenmeat, making a mighty fuss over a humble cabbage-leaf, while beneath them crawls a creature of lower organism — the humble tortoise — whom a time-honoured fable has immortalised as the type of the slow, steady, meritorious plodder—the winner of the most celebrated stern wager on record. What a source of comfort has that well-worn fable been to the dull mediocrities of all succeeding ages! It was well enough, no doubt, in its day, when sailors were afraid of losing sight of land; when the lumbering war-chariot was quoted as a type of fearful velocity, and the sounding javelin imagined to be a terrible weapon; but the "form" of Chelonius is hardly good enough for these latter days: it requires pace as well as bottom to bring folks into the front rank in the year of grace 1872. For all this, the modest walk, or rather crawl in life of Chelonius, has many advantages. The sober iron-clad does not wear "his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at," not he; but when insulted, kicked, or trampled on by an unappreciative world, votes himself "incompris," draws in his horns, and retires into himself, there to wait till called for. I love the unobtrusive tortoise right well, mainly, I believe, on account of his family resemblance to the luscious diamond-backed terrapin, defined by the Transatlantic showman as "an amphibberous animile—can't live on land, and dies in the water."

Many a time and oft have I met that interesting creature, and never have I experienced the slightest difficulty in "putting myself outside" of him. Admirable as my hard-shell friend is in soup, the highest and most apoplectic authorities agree in declaring that the terrapin "prefers" to be eaten stewed.

Like Sir Richard Strachan, "burning to be at 'em," blear-eyed ferrets blink viciously at noisy, conceited ducks; game-cocks trumpet their shrill note of defiance; hedgehogs suggest a few pointed remarks. But it is getting late, the shops are shutting up, the last haggler for a cheap ox-head is carrying off his prize in triumph, so we will emerge into the open street, turn our backs upon the "tall bully" of Fish-street-hill, and wending our way homewards, look forward hopefully to the next market-day.

BRITISH AMAZONS.

Amazonian dames, be it said rejoicingly, are not common products of British soil; still it has now and again given birth to women as ready with the sword as their sisters with the more natural weapons of the sex. Boadicea led the Iceni against the legions of Suetonius, with a courage deserving better fortune. Athelfleda, the warlike daughter of Alfred, directed the slaughter of the Danes in the streets of Derby. Our early English queens were familiar enough with the tented field and the clang of battle; but the Mauds, Eleanors, Isabellas, and Philippas, were alien born. Had the Armada succeeded in landing its armed freight, the Prince of Parma would have had to try conclusions with an antagonist more than worthy of his steel, in the greatest of the Tudor sovereigns. When Elizabeth, marshalling her enthusiastic troops at Tilbury, declared she would be

their general rather than dishonour should befal her realm, telling them, "I am come amongst you at this time, not for my own recreation or sport, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of battle, to live and die amongst you all; to lay down for my God, for my kingdom, and for my people, my honour and blood even to the dust;" depend upon it, not a man who heard her spirit-kindling words, or saw her

> Most bravely mounted on a stately steed,
> With truncheon in her hand,

doubted, if the occasion came, that his queen's actions would justify her proud speech, and prove she had, as she boasted, the heart of a king, and of a king of England too!

For centuries after the Conquest, Englishmen were never happy unless they had some fighting on hand. If they were, for a wonder, at peace with France and Scotland, they contrived to find something to fight about among themselves—to-day the crown, to-morrow the charter. Bellicose barons were never at a loss for rebellion when every question was settled by force of arms, and the hardest hitter had the best of the argument; and while they marched to help their party or their king, their strongholds were left in charge of their wives. This necessitated the assumption, at least, of a martial spirit on the part of the lady of the castle, since, if her lord's friends got the worst of the bout, the victors were pretty sure to call upon her at their earliest convenience; and when put to the touch, many a lady of high degree showed herself proficient in the art of self-defence. The Northampton Dudleys owe their curious crest—a helmeted female, with bare bosom and dishevelled hair—to an Amazon pro tem., Agnes Hotot. The father of this plucky and stalwart girl, having a dispute with a neighbour as to the ownership of a certain piece of land, agreed to settle the matter by ordeal of battle. When the day came, Hotot lay ill and incapable, fretting and fuming in his bed at the thought of losing his land without striking a blow for it. Miss Agnes, determined that neither father nor foe should be disappointed, donned a suit of armour, mounted her sire's horse, appeared at the rendezvous, and acted her part so ably, that she unhorsed her adversary, and made him sue for mercy, whereupon she made herself known to the mortified gentleman, and rode home in triumph.

That women with no gentle blood in their veins could play the soldier well, chronicler Hall testifies. Recording the battle near Naworth Castle, in 1570, between Lords Hunsdon and Dacres, he says, "There were amongst the rebels many desperate women that gave the adventure of their lives, and fought right stoutly." One such plebeian virago has a triple chance of escaping oblivion, her name being enshrined in the verse of Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Butler, to say nothing of her having a ballad all to herself. English Moll, as Butler calls her, distinguished herself in the attempt to recover Ghent from the Prince of Parma, in 1584:

> When captains courageous, whom Death did not daunt,
> Did march to the siege of the city of Gaunt,
> They mustered their soldiers by two and by three,
> And the foremost in battle was Mary Ambree.

Armed with sword and target, and encased in mail, this Amazon is said to have placed herself at the head of a thousand and three men, and sustained an unequal combat with three thousand Spaniards for seven hours, displaying wonderful skill and strength, and when forced to draw off her men, retiring into a castle, from which she defied the enemy, and challenged any three Spaniards to try their prowess against her single arm. Summoned to surrender, she spurned the offer with contempt, telling the Spanish commander,

> No knight, sir, of England, or captain you see,
> But a poor simple lass called Mary Ambree.

She came out of the war unscathed, and returned to England, but of her ultimate fate the balladist, who sang so heartily of her valour, is silent.

Our next specimen of the British Amazon is a modern one. Hannah Snell, the youngest daughter of a Worcester hosier, came of a martial-minded stock; each of her three brothers shouldered a musket in the king's service, and all her four sisters chose soldiers or sailors for their husbands. Hannah was born upon St. George's Day, 1723, and even as a child preferred playing at soldiers to any more feminine game. When seventeen, she lost father and mother, and by consequence, her home, finding a new one with a married sister in London. Three years later, she was married by a Fleet parson to a Dutch seaman, who, after ill-treating her and half starving her for seven months, suddenly disappeared. One would have thought Hannah would have rejoiced at getting rid of her ill-conditioned mate; but she determined to go in

quest of the truant, borrowed a suit of her brother-in-law's clothes, and thus disguised, found her way to Coventry. Here she enlisted in Captain Miller's company of Guise's regiment, and began her campaigning with a twenty-two days' march to Carlisle. Unluckily for her prospects, our heroine made a mortal enemy of one of the sergeants, by thwarting him in some dishonourable scheme, and he soon contrived to revenge her interference by accusing her of neglect of duty, and getting her sentenced to receive six hundred lashes. These, or rather four hundred of them, were duly administered, if we may trust her biographer, although it is hard to understand how such a punishment could be inflicted without her sex being discovered. Disgusted with this harsh treatment, Hannah left the regiment without troubling the authorities for a formal discharge, and after wandering about for a month, found herself in Portsmouth, with empty pockets. In this predicament, she could think of nothing better than accepting his majesty's bounty again, and ere many hours elapsed, Hannah was transformed into a marine, and doing duty on board the sloop Swallow, attached to Boscawen's fleet, bound for the East Indies.

James Gray, as she called herself, became popular on board the sloop on account of her readiness to help her messmates in washing and mending their clothes. After a futile attempt on Mauritius, the fleet made for Fort St. David's, on the coast of Coromandel, and the marines disembarked to strengthen the army besieging Aracopong. Gray was engaged in several skirmishes, and witnessed the blowing up of the enemy's magazine, which brought the siege to an end. Marching on Pondicherry, the troops were obliged to ford a river running breast high, in the face of the French batteries, and our female warrior was the first "man" to cross. She took her share in picket duty, worked hard at trench-making, and when the trenches were made sat in them for seven successive nights mid-deep in water; she received six shots in one leg, and five in the other, and then was hit in the groin. Not caring to ask the aid of the regimental surgeon, Hannah secured the services and secrecy of a black woman, with whose help she extracted the ball and cured the wound. Sickness next struck her down, and obliged her to go into the hospital for three months. Upon her recovery she was sent on board the Tartar, pink, and served as a common sailor, until turned over, in the same capacity, to the Eltham, man-of-war. The smoothness of her face and chin earned her the sobriquet of Miss Molly Gray, but when her new shipmates found her ready to join in any fun afoot, they rechristened her Hearty Jemmy. While on shore at Lisbon, she learned by the merest accident that her faithless husband had been executed for the murder of a gentleman at Genoa. The Eltham was paid off in 1750, and Hannah resumed her petticoats. Her story was talked about, and the manager of the Royalty Theatre, in Wellclose-square, induced her to appear there in several naval and military characters. The Duke of Cumberland obtained her a pension of twenty pounds, and changing her vocation once more, she took a public house at Wapping, attracting customers thereto by a sign representing a sailor and a marine, with the legend, The Widow in Masquerade, or the Female Warrior. The venture proved successful, and unmindful of her first failure, Hannah married a carpenter named Eyles, and had a son born to her, to whom a lady of fashion stood godmother, and carried out a godmother's duty by paying for his education. Brave Hannah's career came to a peaceful but sad end; in 1789 she became insane, and was removed to Bethlehem Hospital, where she died on the 8th of February, 1792, at the age of sixty-nine.

Christian Kavanagh was the daughter of an Irish maltster, who, soon after the battle of the Boyne, went to the bad in his business, and was glad to have her taken off his hands by an aunt, the hostess of a Dublin inn. In course of time Christian occupied her aunt's place, and married her waiter, Richard Welsh. Two children came, and for four years her life jogged on comfortably and quietly enough. One day Welsh went to pay the brewer, and never came back; for twelvemonths his wife heard nothing of him; then came a letter relating how he had been inveigled on board a vessel taking recruits to Flanders, how he had spent his money, and in desperation enlisted. Mrs. Welsh was not long deciding what to do. She placed her children with some relatives, donned male attire, and followed her husband's example.

Taking kindly to drill, Christian Welsh was quickly despatched to Holland, fought her first fight at Landen, received her

first wound, and was invalided for a couple of months. This bad beginning did not damp her ardour; on the contrary, she grew so attached to a military life that she forgot the purpose for which she embraced it, and never troubled herself to make any inquiries about her Richard. The following summer, while foraging, she was taken prisoner, but was soon exchanged and back with her regiment. While quartered at Gorcum, Christian had the impudence to make love to a burgher's daughter, actually fighting a duel with a rival, and wounding him dangerously. This rival was a sergeant, and but for the intercession of the girl's father the victorious Amazon would have paid dearly for her triumph; as it was, she was dismissed the regiment. She immediately entered Lord John Hayes's dragoons, serving with them at the capture of Namur. At the peace of Ryswick the regiment was disbanded, and the she-dragoon returned to England, but never went home—her mind was thoroughly unsexed, and she hated the idea of confessing her womanhood.

Upon the breaking out of the war of the Spanish succession, Christian went back to her old regiment, and did a man's part in most of the engagements of Marlborough's campaign of 1702-3. At the battle of Donavert, in 1704, a ball penetrated her hip. The doctors failed to extract the bullet, but nearly discovered her secret. At the battle of Hochstadt, she was one of a party detached to guard the prisoners; while performing this duty she came across her husband, whom she had not seen for twelve years, and discovered that he had consoled himself by taking a Dutch woman as her successor. The irate dame, making herself known to the astonished man, gave him a bit of her mind, but relieved his fears by declaring she had no intention of claiming her rights, but would be a brother to him so long as he did not betray her confidence. This curious bargain was faithfully kept, until a shell fractured Christian's skull at Ramillies, and the surgeon who trepanned her found out the long hidden truth, and his patient was of course dismissed the service. The officers saw her remarried to Welsh, and subscribed a handsome sum by way of dowry. No longer allowed to fight, the stout-hearted matron turned cook and sutler; the officers did not look very closely into her doings, and she, consequently, turned the change to profitable account. Her husband was killed at Taisnieres. Eleven weeks afterwards she married a grenadier, to become a widow again, before St. Venant; but she followed the fortunes of the army till the war came to an end, and her occupation with it.

Taking the advice of the Duke of Argyll, Christian Jones petitioned Queen Anne, setting forth that she had served her country as a soldier for twelve years, had received several wounds, and lost two husbands in her majesty's service. The petition, presented in person, was most graciously received. Perceiving that the petitioner would soon give her another subject, the queen ordered fifty pounds to be given her to defray expenses, promising that if the child proved a boy, he should receive a commission as soon as he was born. Great was Christian's chagrin when she became the mother of a girl. However, the queen did not forget her. A pension of a shilling a day was bestowed on her, and she again changed her name by marrying one Davis, a soldier, of course, settling down at Chelsea and laying the gentry and military under contribution whenever she needed any extra comforts. While engaged in nursing her husband, Christian caught cold; this brought on serious illness, and ended her adventurous life on the 7th of July, 1739. This extraordinary woman was interred with military honours in the burying-ground of the Soldiers' Hospital.

In 1761, a woman enlisted under the name of Paul Daniel, in the hope of being sent to Germany, where her husband was serving in the army, but was detected by a keen-eyed sergeant. In 1813, a farmer's daughter, hailing from Denbighshire, took his majesty's shilling, and entered the Fifty-third Regiment, in order to be near her lover. She had, however, made a slight mistake, and when she found her sweetheart had joined the Forty-third, the damsel's martial desires evaporated, and she obtained her discharge.

Amazons have not been unknown to the naval service. One Ann Mills served as a seaman on board the Maidstone frigate, and distinguished herself by her personal prowess in an action with a French ship. In 1761, Hannah Whitney, while disporting herself in male attire, was seized by a press-gang, and sent, with other victims, to Plymouth prison. Indignant at this treatment, the fair captive declared she was not what she seemed to be, at the same time letting the authorities know their harshness had lost them the services of a marine of five years' experience. The fact that a

woman fought and died on board one of Nelson's ships, came to light in a curious way. In 1807, a young woman, calling herself Rebecca Ann Johnston, was brought before the lord mayor, having been found, in a sad condition, in the streets. She was dressed as a sailor, and said she came from Whitby, having deserted from a collier, after serving four out of the seven years' apprenticeship to which she had been bound by her step-father, who had likewise bound her mother to the sea, on which she met her death at the bombardment of Copenhagen. The last female warrior of whom we have anything to say, can scarcely be called a British Amazon, unless her having served under the British flag entitles her to the designation. All we know about her is contained in the following paragraph from the Annual Register of 1815: "Amongst the crew of the Queen Charlotte, one hundred and ten guns, recently paid off, it is now discovered was a female African, who had served as seaman in the royal navy for upwards of eleven years, several of which she has been rated able on the books of the above ship, by the name of William Brown; and has served as the captain of the foretop, highly to the satisfaction of the officers. She is a smart figure, about five feet four inches in height, possessed of considerable strength and great activity; her features are rather handsome for a black, and she appears to be about twenty-six years of age. Her share of prize-money is said to be considerable, respecting which she has been several times within the last few days at Somerset-place. In her manners she exhibits all the traits of a British tar, and takes her grog with her late shipmates with the greatest gaiety. She says she is a married woman, and went to sea in consequence of a quarrel with her husband, who, it is said, has entered a caveat against her receiving her prize-money. She declares her intention of again entering the service as a volunteer."

LELGARDE'S INHERITANCE.

IN TWELVE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER VII.

LELGARDE had forced me into an armchair, and flung herself down on a footstool at my feet, turning so that she could speak without my seeing her face. These preparations almost frightened me. What was she going to say? Her beginning took me by surprise.

"Joan, when we were talking about ghosts the other night, at the rectory, you only said something about it in joke. What do you think seriously?"

"Seriously, my dear, I think there is no necessity to make up one's mind, as we are not at all likely to be troubled with such visitations."

"If you saw a ghost, what would you think? what would you do?"

"Have *you* seen a ghost?" I asked, to bring matters to a point.

She looked up at me earnestly.

"Joan, I declare to you solemnly that I believe I have: not once, nor twice, but many, many times. My life has been made wretched; my nights—oh! how can I have such nights, and keep my life and reason?"

She was trembling violently. I felt that it must all be told now; stroking down her hair, I said, as quietly as possible: "Tell me all about it, child, as distinctly as you can; it will be all right, depend upon it."

"I will—I will tell you all. Hold me closer, Joan—how I love your dear old steady hand. You will hold mine when I am dying, won't you, Joany? You will take care of me to the last?"

"Go on, my dear; you are not going to die just yet."

"I don't know—sometimes I feel as if I could not bear much more of this; but I don't want to die, it is horrible to think of drifting out into the cold shadow-world, where—where they are—where she is. Oh! Joan, listen to the wind."

"Never mind the wind, my child," said I, "and as to death—though it is life you should be thinking about—what is death but going to our mother, to your father—to the Great, Good Father of us all?"

"But the valley of the shadow of death, the king of terrors! Those words have meaning, Joan. Well, I am telling you nothing; be patient, and I will. You remember the day we examined the cabinet, and saw her picture? the day Mrs. Bracebridge told us that sad story?"

"Yes; and how you waked me up at an unearthly hour the next morning."

"You asked me if I had slept badly. Now, Joan, I am going to tell you the history of that night, solemnly and truly."

"Go on, little woman, I am listening to you."

"I fell asleep—and how long I slept I do not know—I can hardly say I awoke:

that does not describe it—but I became conscious suddenly; and what roused me was the sound of weeping—such weeping, so despairing, so terrible, Joan, that it made my heart stand still."

"My poor little pet, it was Mrs. Bracebridge had been telling us about those terrible hysterical weepings — you were over-wrought by the story, that is all."

"Let me go on: next I became conscious that I could see. There was some sort of light, but whether from window, fire, or candle, I cannot tell you, but I saw—yes, distinctly, a figure by my bedside; I never can remember the dress, I have only a vague impression of some loose wrapper, of a light colour; but the face! oh, Joan, believe me, I am not fancying things; it was the face of Miss Hilda's portrait, only older, far older, worn and white, and bathed in tears—such a face of despair, that if you really saw such a one, you would be wretched for days afterwards."

"But, fortunately, it was only seen in a dream, my pretty one: a dream very easily accounted for. Come, is that all?"

"I wish it were. Now, Joan, all this does not seem to me like a dream in looking back upon it; but what came next, you will say must have been. I had a vague feeling of being carried—hurried along dark galleries, and down cold stairs. Oh, this I never can make you understand. I can't get at my own idea, or put it into words. It was I who endured all this, it was I who felt the cold, and the wretchedness, and the sickening, overwhelming terror; and yet it was not I, but another creature: and I pitied that other creature —that other, that was I, and yet not I."

"Nightmare."

"Call it so if you will. I grew more conscious, but the scene was changed. I stood before that cabinet. Do you remember my saying I fancied it had a secret recess somewhere?"

"I do."

"Well, that recess opened at a touch—mine, or that other's—and something was found there, something was said to me. I have tried for hours and hours to recollect what, but I cannot—it is all a blank. Only one sentence I seem to have carried away with me, wailed into my ears in a despairing moan, 'Remember, when the day comes, that wrong can never be right.'"

"And was this all your dream?"

"It ends always with some vague feeling of cold and discomfort, but nothing more is distinct. The vision, or dream, if you like, fades away, and the next thing that happens is that it is morning."

"Then this has happened more than once?"

"More than once? Night after night! Joan"—she hesitated here—"you fancy that my liking for Mr. Seymour Kennedy is strange. Do you know the reason of it? He has power to lay the ghost."

"What can you mean?"

"I mean that the night after his visit, and sometimes the night before, I am never troubled. It is strange, is it not? I don't like him really; he is most unlike all that I have been used to make my type of excellence; but surely he must be destined in some way to rule my fate, or why has he this strange influence over the curse that pursues me?"

"A curse!—my dear, strong language! Those dreams show a bad state of health, and you ought to have mentioned them before."

Lelgarde rose and stood before me, looking like a ghost herself in her white wrapper.

"Joan," she said, "I have allowed you to talk about dreams, but it will not do; it is no dream, no fancy. Something does really visit my room at night."

Her voice, her tone of conviction, the remembrance of the servants' gossip, all made my blood curdle. Unimaginative as I am, little as I believe in ghosts, I could hardly command my voice in asking Lelgarde to explain her reasons for what she said.

"Every night I lock my door, and I always find it locked in the morning; but my room is entered nevertheless. I always put my candle on this chair by the bed. I have repeatedly in the morning found the chair moved, the candle and match-box put on the table. You know," and she smiled a little, "how you used to fidget me about putting my shoes side by side, and that I have got into the fixed habit of doing so. Well, I have found them separated, as if some foot, treading perhaps in doubtful light, had disarranged them."

"A substantial spirit then, Lelgarde, by your own showing."

"You mean that you think some one is playing me a trick? Who could be so fiendishly cruel? Besides, how do you account for the cabinet, the secret recess, all those strange visions which, even in the daytime, haunt me? I vow to you, Joan, that I can never shake them off, except

when Mr. Kennedy is here. He is so amusing and clever, and I get sometimes so much entertained, and sometimes so angry with him, that just for that time I forget myself."

"And then you do not dream? Dearest, does not that show that it is an effect of imagination—the whole thing?"

"I have told myself so; I almost believed it. And then I began to observe the disarrangements in my room. Joan, it is useless to fight against it. I am doomed to be hunted down—that is what I feel, that and nothing else. Tell me, why could I not live here as a child? What was it that scared me nearly to death or madness?"

She was kneeling before me now, looking at me with her great woful eyes, full of a dark terror which I felt almost powerless to fight against.

"We will go away, Lelgarde," I cried; "you are rich, my darling; you shall not stay here to be ill. Let us go to Italy: let us go to Rome, and look up your old friend Harry."

Things were come to a pass, indeed, when I was driven to this suggestion! I was glad to see her cheeks colour up, and a more natural look return to her eyes.

"Yes, I should like that," she said. "I should dearly like it—but I thought I ought to stay here; it is my home, and my duties lie here."

"Your first duty is to get well and strong, my pet."

"Perhaps so; as it is, I am getting weaker every day. I cannot tire myself into sound sleeping, as I used to do; and oh! do you wonder that I dread death? To become myself one of that fearful, shadowy world!"

"Hush, Lelgarde, we will talk no more about it to-night. You shall sleep in my arms, as you did in your baby days. Come, let us say our prayers and go to bed; and let the ghosts think twice before they come and torment my child, now she has her old Joan to take care of her."

I succeeded in making Lelgarde smile, but I must confess that I was feeling very shaky, for all my bold speeches. Lelgarde, thoroughly exhausted, and safe in my arms, was soon sleeping heavily with her head pillowed on my shoulder; but I lay awake all night long, listening to the wind, trembling at the driving rain, and hearing in every slamming door and creaking window ghostly footsteps coming to haunt my darling.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was not till daylight was peeping in through the chinks in the closed shutters that Lelgarde opened her eyes with a freshened, invigorated look which did my heart good.

"Yes," she said, in answer to my anxious questions, "I have slept soundly indeed. It seems only a minute ago that I went to bed. Oh! dearest old Joan! what a blessing you are to me!"

"And this heavy-treading ghost has not been here to-night," I said, pointing to the little slippers; "everything is just as we left it; let us hope that it is exorcised for good and all."

Nevertheless, I was resolved to carry Lelgarde away for a little while. I must own that I felt almost as anxious as she could be to get away from Athelstanes, the servants' talk tallying so uncomfortably with what she herself had told me, had impressed on my mind a vague sense that everything was weird and uncanny, and I went about, feeling ready to jump and scream on the smallest provocation. But several days and nights passed, and nothing happened to frighten either of us. Determined not to let Lelgarde pass another solitary night as long as we were under that roof, I had a mattress carried into her room every night, and I had the satisfaction of seeing her look fresher and brighter at every awakening. She had ceased to hang restlessly about Miss Hilda's room, and I was quite sorry, when, one afternoon, only two or three days before that fixed for our departure, Mrs. Bracebridge requested her presence there to decide on some question of new chintz or dimity, which might quite as well have waited till our return.

But Mrs. Bracebridge's requests were not easy to refuse or shirk; and she was anxious to set all her handmaidens to their sewing while we were away; so she discoursed, pointing out the tattered state of the garniture in question, and Lelgarde assented, her eyes all the time roving about with the hunted look which I hoped had entirely left them. I cut short the good old lady's speech as much as I could, and when she was gone I tried to hurry my sister off at once to the drawing-room; but she lingered, and, as if drawn by some irresistible attraction to the ebony cabinet, opened it, and again began fingering it in every direction, with the perplexed look of a child over a puzzle.

"I cannot make it out," she murmured.

"Sunday, to-morrow," I said, as if I had not heard her; "I suppose Mr. Seymour Kennedy will be here; our sudden move will take him by surprise."

"He has a fine evening for his journey," she said, closing the cabinet, and we went into the drawing-room.

That night I awoke suddenly, with the peculiar sensation of not waking naturally, with a tightening of the breath, and a vague feeling of terror. My bed faced the door —and that door—that door which I had myself locked overnight—stood wide open, showing the black passage outside. It had come then, whatever it was—this night-walking horror—its haunting presence was to manifest itself also to me. We burned a night-light, and I raised myself softly, and looked at Lelgarde's bed to see if she were awake or not. The bed was empty!

Never shall I forget that moment of wild, perfectly unreasoning horror. Had this dreadful thing the power to lure her away to some fearful doom? Could such things be permitted in a world God governed?

These thoughts went whirling through my brain, while I threw myself out of bed, and made one spring to the door; at the same moment the moonlight came streaming through the long line of windows along the gallery; and, a few yards in front of me, full in the flood of light, glided along a white-robed female figure. On, on, on, with even footsteps—at the head of the stairs it paused for half a moment, and I got a clearer view of it. Is it the spirit of Hilda Atheling? No—that desolate figure in Harry Goldie's picture has surely stepped out of his canvas. It is Lelgarde, Lelgarde herself! though the fixed, corpse-like features, the dead expression of the eyes are most unlike her. Thanks to stout nerves and common sense, in one minute I understood the whole—Lelgarde had resumed the naughty tricks of her childhood, and was walking in her sleep. All was explained now; the white figure, the disarranged room, the unfastened door. In the relief of that moment I could have laughed aloud, but I checked every sound that could disturb her sleep. The doctor's assurances, long ago uttered, recurred to my mind, that to wake her hastily might cost her her reason or her life.

As I had often done in days gone by, I crept after her, keeping down my breath, holding myself ready to clasp and soothe her, should she suddenly awake, and tolerably free from uneasiness about her safety, as I had often seen with what more than waking caution she could guide her steps.

Evenly and softly she moved down the broad, shallow stairs; across the hall, and into Miss Hilda's room; I following. Straight to the cabinet she walked—the moon filled the room with its pale brightness, and I could see all her actions distinctly. She opened the doors, she took out and laid aside, without an instant's hesitation, the third drawer on the right-hand side: she ran her fingers over some small ivory mouldings, which formed a pattern round the pigeon-hole thus revealed; they were exactly alike, but I saw her select one, and then—not press it, as she had always tried to do when awake —but draw it towards her. It remained in her hand, a long, ivory-headed peg, and there dropped into the aperture from above a small square receptacle—a sort of drawer, closely packed with papers. She took them, unfolded them one by one, looking with her fixed, unseeing eyes, straight before her all the while; folded them up and put them back, replacing one after the other, box, peg, and drawer, closed the cabinet, then repeated, in the dull voice of a child saying a lesson which it does not understand:

"If that day should ever come, I will look here, and remember that wrong can never be right."

Then she left the room, mounted the stairs, traversed the long gallery, finally, to my intense relief, entered her room, relocked the door, barely giving me time to slip in after her, and laid herself down in her bed. I took the precaution of extracting the door-key, and putting it under my pillow: and then, chilled to the bone, and a good deal perplexed, but wonderfully comforted, I composed myself to sleep.

"Are you certain? Was it really so?" Lelgarde asked incredulously, when kneeling by her bedside in the early morning I told her all the adventures of the night. Then, throwing her arm round my neck, and drawing my ear down close to her lips, she whispered:

"Are you sure I was alone?" And I felt her quiver with superstitious dread.

"My dearest, you must use your common sense," I said, with all the authority I could muster; "you know this is nothing new, only an old habit resumed."

"A habit that grew out of my first visit here, Joan; and what natural power could lead me to find out that secret drawer which I can never have seen opened?"

"Are you sure that you never saw it opened? Do you remember our conversation the first evening that we met Mr. Seymour Kennedy? I begin to think that some recollection of your first visit has all this time been working in your brain without your own knowledge."

"Are you certain that you did not dream all this yourself?"

"Well, that is a question we can soon settle; I will undertake to teach you the way to open the hidden drawer as you taught it to me last night."

The breakfast-bell sounded before we were ready for it: and we would not keep the servants loitering over their work on a Sunday morning: but, as soon as we had despatched the meal, we hastened to search the ebony cabinet. I must confess that I felt a little doubtful of my own senses, when I saw its improbable aspect, and Lelgarde was inclined to laugh at me, perhaps really to hide some little tremor.

"Is this the little ivory knob? This third one on the right side? I do not believe it, Joan; it is impossible to get a sufficient hold of it to pull it—ah!"

She broke off suddenly; with unexpected force the little projection seemed almost to spring to meet her fingers, and, as she drew out the peg, down fell the small uncovered box with its hoard of tightly compressed papers.

"There! was I dreaming?" I exclaimed; but Lelgarde interrupted me with a shrill cry, half fright, half relief, and clasped her fingers over her eyes.

"I see—I see it all. I remember the whole of it!" she cried, eagerly; "it all comes back to me. Oh, poor little creature, how I suffered! how scared and terrified I used to be."

"Are you crazy, my child? What is it you remember?"

"This drawer—that opening—was not it just what a child would remember? And the way I was shown it—the fright! Oh, no wonder I had a nervous fever—no wonder I ran away: this has reminded me of everything."

"Tell me what it is, quickly, dearest; but don't get so excited about it."

Gathering the papers up in her hand, she said:

"I do not know what these are, I never did know; but, Joan, I know now who it was that frightened me at Athelstanes; it was that poor, weeping, terrible woman, my cousin Hilda. Yes, that was when it—my vision, I mean—really happened, in truth, not in fancy. It was she who used to come, with her terrible weeping, and wake me up at night, and bring me down here, poor little, cold, scared thing, and show me the secret of the hiding-place, and repeat again and again those words about wrong never being right; and make me promise to look here in case I should ever be mistress of Athelstanes. What ever these papers contain, remember, Joan, I said all this before I looked at them."

"Then Miss Hilda, not Miss Ethel-dreda, was your tormentor after all. But surely, Lelgarde, she was bed-ridden, or, rather, sofa-ridden; had she not lost the use of her limbs?"

"Of course she had; every one said so. Oh! I see this room now just as it used to be, and her waxen-looking face and hands, and draperies, all as white as snow, on this red couch. That was the dreadful thing; seeing her lie motionless all day, and then being visited by her in this stealthy, fearful way at night; and then she wept. Oh! how is it I ever forgot that weeping?"

"She must have been a most persistent humbug, or else crazy," I said, feeling anything but charitable towards Miss Hilda.

"Let us see what she had had to turn her brain. I almost begin to think I can guess," said Lelgarde, growing a shade paler. She opened the first paper, glanced over the few lines which it contained, did the same with the next, and then placed them in my hands with a strange sort of smile. "No wonder," was all she said.

The first paper was a certificate of the marriage of Hilda Atheling with Henry Hamilton at some church in the City; the second, bearing date about a year later, recorded the baptism of a second Henry Hamilton, at a seaside town, far away in the West of England.

The secret of Hilda Atheling's life was out at last.

On the 27th of April will be commenced

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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XXXI. THE FALSE LOVE.

SIMON was getting through the cold weather badly. He missed Tibbie, and he missed the fool. He had now to light his scrap of fire with his own trembling fingers, and to cook his morsels of food himself. He had no one to scold, no one on whom to vent in passion the anxiety of his mind, which feared that he must yet be robbed, and live to die a pauper. His soul, too, was racked by tortures of doubt as to his nephew's fitness for the trust which had been reposed in him. In the business of wringing money from the tenants he did not show that eagerness and ingenuity which Simon had hoped to find in him. He had proposed to grant a small piece of mountain land to a certain old beggar woman, so that she might build herself a house, and live in it free of rent. There was an audacity in this proposal which had terrified the miser. How was he safe in the hands of a person who could conceive and give utterance to such an idea? He could only keep watch over the doings of this nephew and agent, exerting himself meanwhile to make amends, by personal economy, for any extravagance which the young man might perpetrate. He had now reduced the cost of his living very low, powder and shot being the chief items of his expenditure; and larks and thrushes, crows and sparrows, were the dainties which supplied the absence of more ordinary food. Since Tibbie's disappearance he had not enjoyed the luxury of bread. The birds of the air and the roots of the earth were more than enough to satisfy his appetite. He ate but once a day, and the fire was allowed to go out as soon as his dinner had been cooked. This was a new plan of saving, for formerly he had been used to have a fire, however small, at which to warm his frail body in the winter weather. So now he suffered sorely from the cold, though that was little to Simon while he felt that he did his duty. He missed the fool even more than Tibbie, for Con would not now be coaxed within his doors; but would nevertheless come hovering about the place, peering in at the key-holes, and flattening his white face against the window-panes. Simon was often unconsciously an object of close observation to the fool, who, with the strong fascination of hatred, would watch him unseen through some secret loophole; but if Simon chanced to espy him, this irregular visitor would at once vanish off into the woods.

Whilst Tibbie and Katherine were making their way into the house, Simon was sitting in state in his freezing den, expecting the arrival of the new agent upon business. His pistols were beside him on the table; for he never forgot that he was subject to a danger from the presence of his nephew. The fear of the fulfilment of the prophecy by Paul haunted him unceasingly, and made him wary in his dealings with this young man, whom he had admitted into his confidence. He never turned his back upon him for a moment, and never, during their interviews, moved from the table where the pistols lay near his hand. To-day he was sitting thus, provided against danger, when Paul made his appearance—a good deal changed from the Paul of a few months ago, looking pale and thin, with restless eyes and a nervous and uneasy expression about the mouth.

He looked as if the sun had not shone on him for a year. His dress, too, was more careless than it used to be, and he appeared altogether as if things were far from well with him. The change did not escape Simon's eye, and he was pleased with it. "The young man is taking a lesson from me," thought the miser; "he is growing more saving of his pocket, and more sparing of his enjoyments. I see that I have but to be patient with him, and he will yet turn out well."

Paul drew his chair to the opposite side of the table, and uncle and nephew set to work to do their business together. They made a striking contrast, though there was some likeness between them. Paul had his mother's fair skin and fair hair, and was so far unlike the race of the misers, who were of a swarthy complexion. He had a broader forehead than had been the share of any of his fathers, but he had the arched nose of the Finistons, and the dark flashing eye, deep-set under graceful brows. There was enough likeness between the old and the young man to make a looker-on tremble for what Paul might yet become.

Paul delivered over the money which he had collected for rent, but the sum fell short of the miser's expectations.

"So!" cried he in a passion, "I see that already you have allowed yourself to be imposed upon. They tell you they cannot pay. I ask them to look at me. Is there a man on the property who lives with rational temperance except myself? Let them find you the money, or you and I must quarrel. If you will not deal fairly with them, somebody else shall do it. Every man who will not pay must quit the place."

"You had better let them stay where they are," said Paul. "Good times may come, and they may be enabled to meet your demand. Turn them out of the country, and where are the wealthier tenants to fill their place? You will find empty cabins, and no money at all."

"That is your ignorance," said the miser; "but I am willing to teach you. There are shepherds, Scotchmen, who would take the whole mountain from me at a handsome rent. Now am I—a man practising self-denial in my own person—to make enormous sacrifice for the sake of pampered beggars who, I doubt not, will have their two meals in the day? My plan is to get rid gradually of the poorest amongst my tenants. People have no right to live in a country which is not able to support them. For the future I shall expect you to understand me in this matter. If the people will not pay you, you must send the people away."

"I have no liking for the work, sir. I don't see how I can obey you."

"Then, sir, I don't see how you can expect to be my heir. I am not bound to leave my little property to you. I have connexions in England, wise, rich men, who look well to the increase of their store, and deserve a helping hand on that account. To them shall go every penny I am possessed of, if you set up your ideas in opposition to mine."

Paul flushed and turned pale. The time was gone past when such a threat as this had no terrors for him. It was dreadful to him now, for the thirst for power had taken possession of his soul. It enraged him to think of those wise, rich men from England coming over here to plant, and to sow, and to build upon his land. He was convinced that he could rule the country better than they could do, and it might be well to save the many by the sacrifice of a few. Evil must be done in order that good might come of it. Paul swiftly argued thus in his own mind—that clouded mind which was no longer what it had been.

He was conscious of a falling off in his own mental powers, in his capacity for thought and feeling. The consciousness tortured him, but he could not see where he had gone wrong, nor discern any means by which he could become better or wiser in the future. He could not even think the matter out, for his mind would not fasten on it, and all his moral perceptions were becoming hazy and dull. His memory was whimsical; certain ideas passed away from it, like the mist of breath from off a glass, whilst others enlarged themselves, became distorted, and were not to be effaced. He forgot at this moment his former desire to be independent of the miser, his aspirations after honest industry, however meagre the reward. He thought no more of the plans which May had helped him to map out. He remembered only that he wanted Tobereevil, and also that if he quarrelled with the miser, certain rich men from England would step into the inheritance which he coveted. Upon this one point his mind fastened its strength, and the fierce desire for possession took firm hold of his brain. He promised Simon that he would see about the matter.

"See about it in time, then," said the miser, "for you have natural disqualifications for your office, and you will need to work hard in order to overcome them. But I will give you time, for we are a slow race in developing. As young men we are spendthrifts, and seem in danger of being ruined, but time improves us, and we grow wise as we grow old. So you may go away now, and think over this matter of the Scotch shepherds. Have a calculation made by the next time you come here, and let me know how soon we shall be ready for them."

Paul went away with slow steps and aching heart, knowing that he had bound himself to do work which his soul abhorred, and yet feeling himself utterly unable to struggle with the unholy force which had thus dragged him into bondage. Having thus, as he believed, sold himself to evil, he shrank from the eye of the heavens, and from the sad face of the land which lay so sadly waiting for its deliverance. He was seized with a passionate desire to gloat over the old walls, which contained somewhere that treasure which was to make him master of everything that a man could covet in the world. As he went up the grand staircase the thought of May crossed his mind, a vision of her imploring face arose before his eyes, and for a moment the madness of supreme anguish made him dizzy. What would she say when she found that he had fallen so low? But the three passed, and again he thought with delight of the miser's gold, then reflected with sudden wonder upon the condition of his own feelings, since this new joy of avarice had more power to keep its hold of him than had sorrow for the pain of his love. Was it possible that May had become less dear to him than she used to be? He groaned at this thought, and almost declared to himself in his passion that it must be so. If this were indeed the case, then must he rush on headlong to an evil end. Was this, indeed, a fate that was pursuing him? Must the love of May be thrust out of his heart by the power of that curse which was already beginning to work upon him? He leaned against the wall, and hid his face between his hands. He was not false, nor had he tired of her tenderness. She was still rare, and holy, and beautiful in his eyes; but he only seemed to understand this, not to feel it with his heart, into which had come the greed for gold. He seemed to see her at a distance, whither she had retired slowly and cruelly, and against his will. Longing would not bring her to him, despair could not break down the barrier which had erected itself between them. As he stood there, wrestling with an agony such as he had never suffered before, her saddened eyes seemed to shine out of a cloud which was beyond and above him. His woe became intolerable, and he tried to dash it from him, hurrying upward through the chambers of the mouldering mansion, and striving to revive within him all his old loathing of the race which had dwelt in it, and of their treasure which had made them what they were. These fierce efforts wasted him, and he looked thin and worn as he wandered, more tranquilly now, from room to room. A happier thought of his love came uppermost in his mind, and an unutterable longing for her presence took possession of him. If she were only here to receive the confession of his weakness! With this better thought in his mind, he looked up and saw Katherine.

The place of this meeting was on that high remote passage lined with goblin presses, where, not quite a year ago, the miser had essayed to make a bargain with the pedlar. Paul had not seen it since that evening when he had suddenly sickened with fear, and had fled from the spot, hoping to return never more. Now his wanderings had unexpectedly brought him here again. Katherine had been looking out of the little window from which he himself had gazed whilst the miser sorted his wares; the place was dim and ghostly, and she made a striking picture with her white-clad shoulders and gleaming head lit up by the only ray that found its way into the twilight.

She turned to him smiling with genuine delight.

"So you have come at last," she said; "but how did you know I was here?"

"I did not know that you were here," said Paul.

"Ah, well! you see, I drew you to the place. I knew that you were coming to Tobereevil to-day, and I thought I should ask you to take me home through these dreadful woods."

"Certainly," said Paul; but he said it unwillingly, for he had some expectation that May would come to meet him; and at this moment he felt feverishly anxious to meet her. If he could but see her just now, the barrier of reserve might be broken down between them. Now he

could confess, could ask for help; later his mood might change, so that the words he wished to speak would be no longer on his tongue.

"We had better go at once," said Paul. "May is coming to meet me."

Katherine laughed.

"You need not be uneasy about her, for she is making cakes, and she could not leave them. She would not risk the proper shade of brown upon the crust—not for the sweetest conversation that heart ever held with heart."

"You wrong her," said Paul. "She can do much for those she loves."

"Who are they?" said Katherine. "May love any one! The fancy makes me smile."

"You forget that she loves me."

Katherine shrugged her shoulders.

"Does that idea really still bewitch your imagination? You think May loves you? It is so odd."

"I remember that you are a lady," said Paul; "but you try my patience too much."

"Do I?" said Katherine. "I admit that I am rather outspoken. I am not like her—calm, cold, and proper. My patience is tired. I cannot quietly look on and see one like you bound heart and soul, for life, to such an iceberg."

She was still leaning against the little window, with her head and shoulders framed by it. A stray gleam of sun had pierced the opening; illumined her golden head and scintillating eyes; put a carmine touch on her speaking lips, and a rosy curve of light round the rim of her peachy face. The white-furred shoulders stirred slightly, and the jewel at her throat quivered as if with feeling. Never was an unlovely soul more enchantingly disguised. Paul stood opposite, wrapped in the twilight, leaning against one of the goblin presses. His face was stern, but he started as a flashing look of homage was flung upon him, flattering him from head to foot. Katherine went on without waiting for him to recover from his surprise.

"Ah, you think she is not an iceberg. Men are so easily deceived. A few sweet words will keep you happy for a year. That is while you are suitors; but how will it be through life? A selfish mate, a cold heart—freezing all the warm efforts of your own. One who can make cruel plans to fool you while you are her lover—what will she be for sympathy after years have gone past?"

"What do you mean?" asked Paul, and his heart shook with terror of an evil far greater than anything he had imagined.

"Oh, I have said too much. Surely I have forgotten myself. Whispered words between friends ought to be kept sacred, ought they not? I am sure you know that girls are apt to make confidences to each other. But I forgot that you have known so little about women." Katherine sighed. "I have already said too much. I will not be guilty of making mischief between you."

"You are rather late with that resolution," said Paul. "I am at a loss to know why you have spoken so at all."

Katherine turned away a little towards the embrasure of the window, and her head drooped on her hands.

"I have done wrong," she said, "and I cannot say any more. A woman must not betray herself. I did not mean to speak, only when one has a passionate interest at heart, prudence sometimes gets swept away upon the wave of too much feeling."

It came slowly into Paul's mind that her meaning was to drive May out of his heart, and thrust herself therein. He burned with surprise and shame, that a woman, and such a woman, should love him unsought. He pitied her, was grateful to her, admired and despised her, all in one moment. Then indignation took possession of him as he thought of May; and a superstitious dread of Katherine mingled itself with his anger. The spirit of maddening despondency which pursued him, whispered to him now that this woman was a part of his evil destiny, that she would separate him from May, and thus help his ruin. When Katherine looked up to see the effect of her words, she saw a face not full of tenderness, but of hatred and anger. Her blue eyes met his, and opened themselves scared. The sun shone more brightly through the little square of window, and made Katherine more beautiful every moment, intensifying its lustre in her frightened eyes, and shedding a more golden bloom on her cheek, which had turned pale with real woe. For the second time in his life Paul found himself struggling with the frantic desire to harm a fellow-creature; and on the very same spot whence he had fled from the temptation so many months ago. But the fear in the woman's eyes touched all that was manly in his nature, and this passion left him suddenly, and he was shocked at himself.

"It is getting late," he said. "That bright gleam comes just before sunset.

You must allow me to see you home at once."

Katherine bent her head with an expression of meek obedience, which was not all assumed. This wild Paul had got a power over her which no one had ever before possessed; a power wielded unconsciously, and which she had never yet fully recognised until now. They went silently together downward through the mazes of the old mansion, he going first, opening doors, and turning to assist her over broken places in the staircase; she following silently and humbly in her pallid beauty, as if terrified and stricken at what had befallen her. She was stunned, having suddenly come face to face with her own defeat. She had thought to be mistress, and found that she was slave. A pain new to her, so sound in body, so unfeeling in spirit, had cloven her heart at sight of Paul's look of hatred. She was confounded with a new and strange knowledge of herself, so that her agony was genuine, even if rage made a part of it. Every time Paul turned to her, of necessity he pitied her, and his heart reproached him a little more, and a little more. By the time they had got out into the open air his voice had got gentle when he addressed her. By-and-bye, she pleaded to be allowed to cling to his arm, for the fear that she had of these unnatural woods. And this being conceded, the two passed on their way, and were lost in the thickness of the trees.

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

SCOTCH WITCHES AND WARLOCKS.

Superstition, dark shadow born of ignorance and fear, ruled the Scotland of the Middle Ages with a power which almost rivalled that of religion. The ghosts and spectres of the pagan times, dim reflections cast by the rude deities of the Picts, the Norsemen, and the early Irish invaders, long lingered in lonely glens and rocky valleys, by the sides of desolate lakes, and by the ruins of old fortresses, refusing to be exorcised from their old strongholds by calm saints with bell, book, or candle, wrestling for their new religion which had peacefully superseded the grosser worship. In the course of centuries Scotch Christianity gradually became adulterated by an admixture of the old belief, and the Douglas and his followers, who knelt before the shrine of St. Andrew in the morning, at evening shuddered as they rode along the sands, past the Kelpie's Flow, or imagined they saw down a glade of the moonlit woods the Queen of Fairy holding high revel in some clearing among the bracken. Though more numerous in the Highlands, these descendants of the old deities of Scotland were equally feared and dreaded in the more peaceful and more civilised Lowlands. Even in the Catholic times, religion in Scotland, hard and logical as the people were, always assumed a character more stern and gloomy than that of England. The omnipresence, the almost omnipotence of the Prince of Evil, was a vital and prominent article of the creed of the Scotch preacher, before even Calvinism acquired its full sway over the national heart.

Of all the beliefs engendered by semi-christianised paganism, that which took the deepest and most fatal hold was the dread of witchcraft. No Scot, wise or simple, but fully believed, as much as he believed the main articles of the Christian faith, that hundreds of cankered old women, soured by poverty and sorrow, sold themselves formally to the devil, who appeared in propriâ personâ to see the bond signed with their blood, a ceremony accompanied by many ludicrous yet ghastly observances. The blood of men, far-seeing as Bruce and lion-hearted as Wallace, has often run cold to hear how once a year, at the witches' annual Sabbath, the hags who served Satan assembled to hear him preach and deride the religion of Christ with ribald sermon and demoniacal prayers. Nor did men of later days, and more versatile brains, like Sir David Lindsay or Buchanan, ever question that Galloway witches could mutter words that at once transformed the broomsticks they bestrode on the windy heath to flying horses, that bore them swift away over firth and tarn, mountain-peak and glen, steeples and roofs glittering silver in the moonshine, to the King of France's cellars, where, in a circle round the biggest butt of Burgundy, the haggard "cummers" would clatter and chuckle as they quaffed the stolen wine, till the time came to mount again the bonny steeds that had brought them so deftly over the sea.

No sudden sickness fell on a Scotchman in the time of Barfour, or of Knox, but he at once turned pale at the sudden and sure conviction that he was elf-shot, that some witch he had chidden for stealing wood, or to whom he had refused a pinch of oatmeal, or a mutchkin of whisky, had cast a spell over him, had repeated the Lord's Prayer backwards outside his door

or had melted a little wax effigy of him over some enchanted fire. These fears, and such as these, racked and tormented the minds of many generations of worthy Scotchmen, and led to the cruel persecution and horrible deaths of many thousands of rheumatic, half-crazed, hysterical, harmless old women.

A picturesque yet careful summary of a few of these witch-trials will show very perfectly the exact nature of this absurd belief, and the varied character that it assumed as the darkness of superstition lightened or deepened over the bleak northern land where it had taken such firm root.

The Scottish witches seem to have began their infernal cantrips as early as the times of St. Patrick, when a gang of them, as that worthy and vermin-hating saint was crossing to Scotland, hurled a rock at him, which rock is now known as that on which Dumbarton Castle securely stands. In 968, King Duff only saved himself from a mortal sickness, by discovering in time, and breaking, a wax image of himself melting away at a witches' fire at Forres, in Murray. For this treasonable act several witches were immolated. After this acute monarch came Thomas the Rhymer, Thomas of Ercildoune, as he was usually called, whom the Queen of the Fairies decoyed from the Tweed-side meadows into Fairyland. Nor must we forget the great wizard of the Lay of the Last Minstrel, Michael Scott, who shook France and Spain with his spells, and even split the Eildon hills into three. And later came the wicked enchanter, William Lord Soulis, who, when no sword or spear could pierce him, was dropped into a hot cauldron like a ham, and, under considerable protest on his part, boiled to death.

But, leaving the swamp of fiction and coming to the terra firma of fact, let us calmly state that in 1479 no less a person than the Earl of Mar, twelve "mean women," and several wizards, were burnt at Edinburgh for melting a waxen image of the king; and the year after it was currently reported that "the young lady of Mar" had formed a highly improper acquaintance with an Incubus, while in 1537 Lady Glammis, the young and beautiful widow of that pugnacious chieftain, Lord Glammis, or as he was more generally and admiringly called, "Clear the Causeway," and the grand-daughter of that grand old murderer, Archibald Bell-the-Cat, was burnt for witchcraft, on a false charge of poisoning her husband, and attempting to poison the king.

The first recorded witch-trial took place in 1576. On the 8th of November, 1576, Bessie Dunlop, the wife of a yeoman, named Andro Jake of Lyne, in Ayrshire, walking to Monkcastle-yard, weeping for a dead cow and also for her husband and children, who were down with a fever, met the ghost of one Thom Reid, who had been killed at the battle of Pinkie, twenty-nine years before, and was at the time she met him lodging in Fairyland.

"Sancta Maria," said he, "Bessie, why make you such dool and greeting for any worldly thing?"

Thom, we may mention, was a grey-bearded ghost, wearing a grey coat with old-fashioned Lombard sleeves, grey breeks, and white stockings gartered at the knee. He had a black bonnet with silken lace, and carried a white wand in his hand. Eventually the well-clad ghost, consoling the poor crying woman by telling her that though her child would die her husband would recover, disappeared through an impossibly small hole in the nearest dyke. After this came other interviews with the designing ghost. The third time the cloven foot showed pretty clearly, for he endeavoured to persuade her to deny her baptism, but orthodox Bessie declared she would rather be "ridden at horses' tails" than forswear her Christianity. At the fourth meeting Thom came to the woman's own house, carried her audaciously off from a small but select tea-party of her husband and "three creeshie tailors," and took her to a witches' assembly. There were eight women in plaids there and four well-dressed men, who tried to persuade her to go back with them to Fairyland, where she should have plenty of beef and good braw clothes, but frightened Bessie stoutly refused to go, and Thom threatened her for refusing.

After this the Queen of the Fairies, "a stout, comely woman," came to her as she was lying in bed during her confinement, and asked for a drink, which Bessie gave her. The queen told her, as Thom had done, that her child would die, and her husband recover. At a later period, Thom gave Bessie roots to make into powder and salve for human beings, as well as for cattle. Armed with these specifics, Bessie soon became famous as a doctoress. She cured Lady Johnstone's daughter, with spiced ale, of swoons, and her wife's sister's cow, but failed with old Lady Kilbowye's crooked leg, because the marrow of it was

gone, and the blood, according to her great medical authority, Thom, was "dosint," or as we should say benumbed. Bessie's fame as a midwife and nurse soon became only equalled by her fame as a spaewife. She told anxious farmers where such a man's coat was, another's plough-irons, and she disclosed the thief who stole Lady Blair's body-linen. Envious midwives, angry bone-setters, and jealous fortune-tellers soon conspired against poor Bessie. Poor, weakly, crafty woman no doubt, to gain a higher reputation among her poor ignorant country patients, she had trumped up all this story about the ghost of old Thom, and had even shown a green silk lace which she wound round the left arms of women at their time of delivery as a talisman brought for her by that very old soldier from the Queen of Fairyland herself.

Oh what a tangled web we weave
When first we practise to deceive.

Too late, with her limbs crushed in the terrible boots, her ribs snapping on the rack, her poor fingers bleeding in the "pilniewinks," Bessie Jake lamented that she had ever boasted of meeting a soldier's ghost, or a fairy queen. In her delirium, her brain gone, she rambled on with fresh lies about having frequently seen Thom handling goods, like any decent living body, at the Edinburgh market. The last time she met him, said the groaning woman, he had told her she would soon be arrested, but assured her that she would be well treated, and eventually cleared. Lies, lies all, even if the biggest ghost ever rapped up had spoken those words. To the fire she was hurried, and the lies were burnt out of her miserable body in the sight of a pitiless multitude that blackened the Castle Hill of Edinburgh.

Following down the black rings that mark the burning place of these victims of cruel and stupid superstition, we come, in 1590, to John Fian, alias Cunningham, a poor parish schoolmaster at Saltpans, Lothian, who was discovered to occupy the onerous office of secretary and registrar-general to the devil. The witnesses, who feared or disliked this unhappy scholar, deposed that Satan had appeared to him all in white one night as he lay in bed, thinking how he could be revenged on Thomas Turnbull, his landlord, for not white-washing his room as per agreement. It was sworn that to obtain this revenge Fian had sworn allegiance to Satan, and received his recruiting mark, to wit, two pins thrust under his tongue up to their heads. After a trance of three hours in Turnbull's chamber, the poor schoolmaster had told the foolish and suspicious country people of how he had been transported to various mountains half round the world. Under torture, following the lead of dangerous and entrapping questions, the schoolmaster confessed that he had done homage to Satan as he stood in the pulpit of North Berwick Church. To his witch congregation, Satan had said, during a short but appropriate sermon:

"Many come to the fair, but all sell not wares; fear not, though I am grim, for I have many servants who shall never ail or want so long as their hair is on, and never shall a tear fall from their eyes so long as they serve me. Spare not to do evil, eat, drink, and be blithe, take rest and ease, for I will raise you up on the latter day gloriously."

Fian had also entered into a league with Satan and a gang of witches and wizards to wreck King James on his return from Denmark, where he had visited Ann, his future wife. It was also deposed that at the witches' Sabbath in North Berwick Church, Fian and the crew had passed round the church "widdershins," that is, contrary to the sun's course. Fian opened the strong church door by blowing into the lock, and then puffed in the lights, which, very properly burned blue, and appeared as big black candles held by old men's hands all round the pulpit. Satan appeared as a huge black man with a black beard like that of a goat, a high ribbed nose like a hawk's beak, and a long tail. He wore a black gown, and an "evil-favoured" black skull-cap on his head, and preached with a black book in his hand, telling them if they would be good servants to him, he would be a good master to them, and that they should never want. He made the witches all very angry on one occasion, by forgetting the proprieties so much as to call one Rob by his christian name. The congregation all ran "hirdie-girdie" at this, in surprise and consternation, but, nevertheless, no public apology seems to have been made. Fian had also, as he confessed under torture, dug up dead bodies and dismembered them to make charms. At the house of one David Seaton it was sworn that he had opened a lock by merely breathing into the hand of an old wife sitting by the fire. Another time four lighted candles sprang out of his horse's head, and a fifth arose on the staff

which his servant carried. These candles gave a light equal to the sun at noon, and the terrified man seeing them, fell dead on his own doorstep. Fian sent an evil spirit to torment an enemy of his for twenty weeks. He chased a cat, and in the chase "levitated," as Mr. Home would say, up in the air and clean over a hedge. He wanted the cat to fling into the sea to produce shipwrecks. He bewitched a young maiden, and even made a pet cow miraculously follow him even into his schoolroom. He cast horoscopes, and wore moleskins. To make him confess to all this fantastic nonsense, much torturing was requisite. They first bound his head with a rope, and twisted it tight and tighter for an hour. But this did not educe anything but groans. Then they put on the dreaded "boots," and crushed his legs to a pulp. On the third stroke of the cruel wedges he fainted. Then they searched him for the "devil's mark." When he recovered, to stop further tortures he made the above confession, adding that the devil had appeared to him just then, all in black, but carrying a white wand.

On Doctor Fian's renouncing the devil and all his works (it was about time), the evil spirit, he said, angrily broke the white wand he carried, and disappeared. The next day the poor wretch recanted, and then the monsters invented fresh tortures, but he was resolute now, and would invent no more lies. On a January Saturday, 1591, he escaped from their cruelty in a fire on the Castle Hill. Other members of Fian's gang were also dragged to the stake, after endless examinations, that lasted a whole winter, before that miserable pedant, James the First. Agnes Sympson, generally known as the "wise wife of Keith," after dreadful tortures, confessed that she and two hundred other witches had gone to sea in sieves on All Halloween, laughing and drinking as they sailed.

The witnesses against her complained of her using nonsenical rhymes, for the instructing of ignorant people and teaching them to pray; among others, these two prayers, the Black and White Pater Noster, to be used morning and evening:

White Pater Noster,
God was my foster.
He fostered me
Under the Book of palm tree.
Saint Michael was my dame,
He was born at Bethlehem.
He was made of flesh and blood,
God send me my right food;
My right food and dyne too,
That I may to yon kirk go.

To read upon yon sweet Book,
Which the Mighty God of Heaven stoop,
Open, open, Heavens yaits,
Steik, steik, Hello yaits,
All saints be the better,
That hear the White Prayer, Pater Noster.

The Black Pater Noster ran thus:

Four newks in this house, for holy angels,
A post in the midst, that's Christ Jesus,
Lucas, Marcus, Matthew, Joannes,
God be into this house and all that belangs us.

When she sought for an answer from the devil on any occasion, he appeared to her in the shape of a dog; the way of dismissing and conjuring him to go was this, "I charge thee to depart on the law thou lives on," as she did when she dismissed him after her consulting him about old Lady Edmiston's sickness. But the manner how she raised the devil was with these words, "Eloa, come and speak to me, who came in the likeness of a dog." Her sailing with her cummers and fellow-witches in a boat to a ship was very remarkable: the devil caused her and them to drink good wine and beer without money, she neither seeing the mariners nor the mariners her. And after all the devil raised a wind, whereby the ship perished. She baptised a cat to hinder Queen Ann from coming into Scotland.

In her own confession to King James she said that "the devil, in man's likeness, met her going out to the fields from her own house at Keith, betwixt five and six at even, being alone, and commanded her to be at North Berwick Kirk the next night, to which place she came on horseback, conveyed by her good son, called John Couper, and lighted near the kirk-yeard about eleven hours at even. They danced along the kirk-yeard, Geilie Duncan playing on a trump, and John Fian, muffled, led the king. The said Agnes and her daughter followed next. Besides, there were Kate Gray, George Moilis, his wife, Robert Grierson, Katherine Duncan, Bessie Wright, Isabel Gilmore, John Graymail, Duncan Buchanan, Thomas Barnhil and his wife, Gilbert Mackgill, John Mackgill, Katherine Mackgill, with the rest of their cummers, above one hundred persons, whereof there were six men, and all the rest women. The women made first their courtesy to their maister, and then the men. The men turned nine times widdershines about, and the women six times. The devil started up himself in the pulpit like a mickle black man, and calling the roll, every one answered, 'Here.'

"The first thing Satan demanded was if they kept all promise, and had been good

servants, and what they had done since the last time they had convecened. At his command they opened up three graves—two within and one without the kirk, and cutting off from the dead corps the joints of their fingers, toes, and nose, parted them amongst them, and she (Agnes Sympson) got for her part a winding-sheet and two joints. The devil commanded them to keep the joints upon them while they were dry, and then to make a powder of them to do evil withall. Then he bade them to keep his commandments, which were to do all the evil and mischief they could. Before they departed and were dismist they behoved to kiss this diabolical preacher."

In the churchyard at North Berwick, Geillis Duncan, a half-crazed servant-girl, had led the dance, playing a tune called Gyllatripes on the jew's-harp. The devil had confessed to her (well-devised flattery, but fruitless), that James was a man of God and his greatest enemy. She and some other witches had sunk a vessel on one occasion, and on another baptised a cat. Doctor Fian, she owned, acted as secretary and registrar at their meetings. She, too, went to the ever-ready bonfire. Barbara Napier, wife of an Edinburgh burgess, and sister-in-law to the Laird of Carschoggill, was acquitted, much to the rage and regret of the Scottish Solomon. A lady of good family, Euphemia Maclean, daughter of Lord Cliftonhall, was burnt about the same time, probably all the sooner for being a Catholic and a friend of the hated Bothwell. The year after, a man named Richard Graham was burnt at the Cross in Edinburgh for boasting of having a familiar spirit at his beck, and also for raising a devil in the court-yard of the house of Sir Lewis Ballantyne, in the Canongate, an apparition which, by-the-bye, frightened poor Sir Lewis to death.

The foolish book on Demonology, written by King James before he ascended the English throne, gave a great impetus to the persecution of witches. Droves of old women were hurried to the flames. What special opinions the sapient king held, our readers may gather from the following extracts, which are the very gist of the whole farrago of learned nonsense, which at least did this good to the world, that it probably gave some hints to Shakespeare for his wonderful witches in Macbeth.

"Epistemon. In their actions used towards others, three things ought to be considered; first, the maner of their consulting therefrom; next, their part as instruments; and last, their master's part, who puts the same in execution. As to their consultations therefrom, they use them oftest in the churches, where they convene for adoring, at what time their master inquiring of them what they would be at, every one of them proposes unto him what wicked torture they would have done, either for obtaining of riches, or for revenging them upon any whom they have malice at; who graunting their demaund, as no doubt willingly he will, since it is to doe evill, he teacheth them the meanes whereby they may doe the same; as for little trifling turnes that woman have adoe with, he causeth them to joynt dead corpses, and to make powders thereof, mixing such other things there amongst as he gives unto them. That fourth kinde of spirits, which by the Gentiles was called divine, and her wondering court and amongst was called the Phairie, or our 'good neighbours,' was one of the sorts of illusions that was rifest in the time of Papistrie; for although it was holden odious to prophesie by the divel, yet whom these kind of spirits caried away, and formed, they were thought to be sonsiest, and of best life. To speak of the many vain trottles founded upon that illusion—how there was King and Queen of Phairie of such a jolly court and traine as they had, how they rode and went, eat, and drink, and did all other actions like naturall men and women, I think it were liker Virgil's Campi Elysii, nor anything that ought to be beleeved by Christians, except in generall, that as I spake sundrie times before, the divell illuded the senses of sundrie simple creatures, in making them beleeve that they saw and heard such things as were nothing so indeed.

"Philomathes. But how can it be then that sundrie witches have gone to death with that confession, that they have been transported with the Phairie to such a hill, which opening, they went in and saw a faire queen, who being now lighter, gave them a stone that had sundrie virtues, which at sundrie times hath been produced in judgement?

"Epi. I say that even as I said before of that imaginar ravishing of the spirit foorth of the bodie; for may not the divel object to their fantasie, their senses being dulled, and as it were asleepe, such hilles and houses within them, such glistering courtes and traines, and whatsoever such-like wherewith he pleaseth to delude them, and in the mean time their bodies being senselesse, to convey in their hande any stone or such like thing, which he makes them to imagine to have received in such a place."

Of the burning of old Major Weir and his sister on the Gallows Hill, near Edinburgh, in 1670, traditions still exist.

Mr. Sinclair, a fatuous professor of philosophy at Glasgow University, thus describes the event:

"Major Thomas Weir was born in Clydsdaile, near to Lanerk, and he had been a lieutenant in Ireland long since. What way he came to get some publick command in the city of Edinburgh, in the year '49 and '53, we know not, but it seems he had always been called Major Weir since that time. It seems he had some charge over the waiters at the ports of the city, being, as it were, a check to them. Coming one day, as his custome was, he found some of them in a cellar, taking a cup of ale, neglecting their charge. After a gentle reproof, one of them replyed that, some of their number being on duty, the rest had retired to drink with their old friend and acquaintance Mr. Burn. At which word he started back, and, casting an eye upon him, repeated the word Burn four or five times; and, going home, he never any more came abroad till a few weeks after he had discovered his impieties. It was observed by some that, going to Liberton, he sometimes shunned to step over Liberton-burn, and went about to shun it. Some have conjectured that he had advise to beware of a burn or some other thing which this equivocal word might mean. If so, he had foreseen his day approaching. A year before he discovered himself he took a sore sickness, during which time he spake to all who visited him like an angel, and came frequently abroad again.

"This man, taking some dreadful tortures of conscience, and the terrours of the Almighty being upon his spirit, confessed to several neighbours in his own house, and that most willingly, his particular sins which he was guilty of, which bred amazement to all persons, they coming from a man of so high a repute of religion and piety. He ended with this remarkable expression: 'Before God,' says he, 'I have not told you the hundred part of that I can say more and am guilty of.' These same abominations he confessed before the judges likewise. But after this he would never to his dying hour confess any more, which might have been for the glorifying of God and the edification of others, but remained stupid, having no confidence to look any man in the face, or to open his eyes.

"When two of the magistrates came to his house in the night time, to carry him to prison, they asked if he had any money to secure? He answered, none. His sister said there was, whereupon, to the value of five dollars, in parcels here and there, were found in several clouts. His sister advised the two magistrates to secure his staff especially; for she also went to prison. After he was secured in the Tolbooth, the bailies returned, and went into a tavern near to Weir's house, in the West Bow, a street so called there. The money was put into a bag, and the clouts thrown into the fire by the master of the house and his wife, which, after an unusual manner, made a circling and dancing in the fire. There was another clout found, with some hard thing in it, which they threw into the fire likewise; it being a certain root which circled and sparkled like gunpowder, and passing from the tunnel of the chimney, it gave a crack like a little cannon, to the amazement of all that were present.

"The money aforesaid was taken by one of the two bailies to his own house, and laid by in his closet. After family prayer was ended, he retired into the same closet (where I have been), during which time his wife (who is yet living) and the rest of the family were affrighted with a terrible noise within the study, like the falling of an house, about three times together. His wife, knocking, gave a fearful cry: 'My dear, are you alive?' The bailie came out unafrayed, having (as he said) heard nothing. The money was presently sent away to the other bailie's house, a great distance from Weir's, where, as was reported, there was some disturbance, but in broken expressions.

"During the time of his imprisonment Weir was never willing to be spoken to, and when the ministers of the city offered to pray for him he would cry out in fury, 'Torment me no more, for I am tormented already.' One minister (now asleep), asking him if he should pray for him, was answered, 'Not at all.' The other replied in a kind of holy anger, 'Sir, I will pray for you in spite of your teeth, and the devil your master too,' who did pray, making him at least to hear him; but the other, staring wildly, was senseless as a brute. Another, who is likewise at rest, demanded if he thought there was a God. Said the man, 'I know not.' That other smartly replied, 'Oh, man, the argument that moveth me to think there is a God is thyself, for what else moved thee to inform the world of thy wicked life.' But Weir answered, 'Let me alone.' When he peremptorily forbade one of his own parish ministers (yet alive) to pray, one demanded

if he would have any of the Presbyterian persuasion to pray. He answered, 'Sir, you are now all alike to me.' Then said the minister to him, 'I will pray with you.' 'Do it not,' said the other, 'upon your peril,' looking up to the beams of the house. But prayer was offered up so much the more heartily, because the company about expected some vision. It is observable that, in things common, he was pertinent enough; but when anything about Almighty God and his soul's condition came about, he would shrug and rub his coat and breast, saying to them, 'Torment me not before the time.' When he was at the stake to be burnt, the city minister called to a churchman there looking on, being one of that persuasion whereof Weir was formerly deemed to be, to speak to him; but no sooner he opened his mouth, than he made a sign with his hand and his head to be silent. When the rope was about his neck to prepare him for the fire, he was bid say, 'Lord be merciful to me!' But he answered, 'Let me alone, I will not; I have lived as a beast, and I must die as a beast.' The fire being kindled, both he and his staff, a little after, fell into the flames. Whatever incantation was in his staff is not for me to discuss. He could not officiate in any holy duty without this rod in his hand, and leaning upon it, which made those who heard him pray admire his fluency in prayers. Its falling into the fire with him (let others search out the disparity) minds me of this passage. In Shetland a few years ago a judge having condemned an old woman and her daughter, called Helen Stewart, for witchcraft, sent them to be burned. The maid was so stupid that she was thought to be possessed. When she had hung some little time on the gibbet a black, pitchy-like ball foamed out of her mouth; and after the fire was kindled it grew to the bigness of a walnut, and then flew up like squibs into the air, which the judge, yet living, attests. It was taken to be a visible sign that the devil was gone out of her.

"Some few days before he discovered himself, a gentlewoman coming from the Castle Hill, where her husband's niece was laying-in of a child, about midnight perceived about the Bow-head three women in windows, shouting, laughing, and clapping their hands. The gentlewoman went forward, till just at Major Weir's door there arose, as from the street, a woman above the length of two ordinary females, and stepped forward. The gentlewoman, not as yet excessively feared, bid her maid step on, if by the lanthorn they could see what she was; but haste what they could, this long-legged spectre was still before them, moving her body with a vehement cachinnation — a great unmeasurable laughter. At this rate the two strove for place, till the giantess came to a narrow lane in the Bow, commonly called the Stinking Closs, into which she turned; and the gentlewoman looking after her, perceived the Closs full of flaming torches (she could give them no other name), and as it had been a great multitude of people, stentoriously laughing and gapping with takies of laughter."

The major's poor old half-crazed sister came next to the gallows. She confessed various horrible crimes, which most probably had never been committed. She also owned that the Queen of the Fairies had helped her in spinning, and that her brother and friend, soon after the battle of Worcester, had driven to Dalkeith in a (most uncomfortable!) fiery chariot. On the scaffold the poor wretch tried to strip off her clothes, in order to die with the greatest shame possible, and the rough executioner had at last to fling her by force from the ladder. Her last words were true to the sect to which her brother had claimed to belong:

"Many," she said, "weep and lament for a poor old wretch like me, but, alas! few are weeping for a broken covenant."

Sir Walter Scott, in his Demonology and Witchcraft, describes Major Weir's house, at the head of the West Bow, as then in the course of being destroyed. It was a gloomy, high-storied structure, with the usual outside stairs of the Old Town fortresses of poverty, and it had been alternately a brazier's shop and a magazine for lint. In his High School days, Sir Walter Scott says, "no family would inhabit the haunted house, and bold was the urchin who dared approach the gloomy ruin, at the risk of seeing the major's enchanted staff parading through the old apartments, or hearing the hum of his sister's necromantic wheel."

In 1727, the last witch was burnt in Scotland. She was a poor, half imbecile old Highland woman, near Littledean, in Sutherland, who was accused of having induced the devil to shoe her lame daughter, to serve as a horse on which to ride to witches' meetings. The poor old crone (and how pathetic the picture is!) is said to have sat by the fire prepared for her death warming herself calmly, while the wood was being heaped ready for the execution. In 1736, the cruel witchcraft Act

was repealed, much to the anger of the more zealous Presbyterians.

The last authentic witch-trial in England, according to Mrs. Linton, who has studied the subject, and written a most interesting book upon it, was in 1712, when Jane Wenham, of Walkerne, a little village in the north of Hertfordshire, was sentenced to death, but eventually, thanks to a humane judge, obtained a pardon. Yet still this wise and over self-satisfied century must remember that so conservative are folly and superstition, that only the other day an English labourer was brought before a magistrate for trying to disenchant himself by scoring a supposed witch "above the breath."

ONLY A PASSING THOUGHT.

'Twas only a passing thought, my friend,
Only a passing thought,
That came o'er my mind like a ray of the sun
In the ripple of waters caught;
As it seemed to me, as I say to thee,
That sorrow, and shame, and sin
Might disappear from our happy sphere,
If we knew but how to begin,
If we knew but how to profit
By wisdom dearly bought:
'Twas only a passing thought, my friend,
Only a passing thought.

Why should the nations fight, my friend,
Why should not warfare cease,
And all the beautiful world repose
In innocence and peace?
It seems to me, as I say to thee,
The weak may yet be strong;
There needs but the breath of love and faith
To right the weary wrong,
To right the weary wrong, my friend,
Throughout the world mistaught:
'Twas only a passing thought, my friend,
Only a passing thought.

But though only a passing thought, my friend,
You know as well as I
That thoughts have a fashion to grow to deeds
Under the ripening sky.
So pass it on; let it walk or run,
Or fly on the wings of the wind,
Or, better still, on the wings of the press,
For the service of mankind;
For the service of mankind, my friend,
That needs but to be taught:
'Twas only a passing thought, my friend,
Only a passing thought.

AMONG THE MARKETS.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

Let us stroll along Coventry-street, and across Leicester-square, that spot dear to the heart of the refugee—famous for its regular production of dead cats as some unworthy fields are for their regular crops of stones—and turning up a narrow court to our left, we shall find ourselves all at once in Newport Market.

Struggling through a chaos of vegetables, we are in a long, narrow, paved alley, crowded thickly on either side with butchers' shops. "Buy! buy! what'e buy?" is the word. Brisk acolytes skirmish around us, brandishing formidable knives and truculent-looking cleavers. Joints, prime, middle, and common, hang about in sanguinary profusion; while a brisk business is going on in smaller pieces, scrag, sticking-piece, or those mysterious morsels of meat popularly known as "block ornaments." Hither come the proprietors of dingy restaurants scattered about Soho, where melancholy imitations of French dishes—alas! how different from the divine originals—are vended, at infinitesimal prices, to seedy men in strange attire—men full of schemes for the regeneration of mankind, but inappreciative of the virtues of clean linen—men skilled in many sciences and learned in various tongues, but ignorant, it would seem, of the chemical operation of soap and water when briskly applied to the human body.

Hither, too, at the stroke of noon, comes the British artisan in quest of his simple, but wholesome, strength-giving dinner. Tom Painter walks up to the shop he most affects, and with a scornful glance at the odds and ends—heart, liver, and other "innards"—with an impatient push past leathern-faced old hags chaffering for block ornaments, turning over with unwashed hands, and even testing by the evidence of their olfactory organs the freshness of a doubtful morsel—T. P. selects a prime piece of beef, commands the butcher to cut him his half-pound of steak from that piece, and "just there," indicating with his finger the favoured spot. Having carefully wrapped his steak in a fresh cabbage-leaf, T. P. now hies him to the "pub" he "uses." Ordering his pint of beer, and handing over his meat to the attendant sprite, Tom whiles away the time with the Morning Advertiser till his steak arrives hissing hot, and falling to with relish, the honest fellow heartily enjoys his well-earned meal.

Our friend Tom has probably consumed as much, if not in actual weight, certainly in money value, as would, laid out to better advantage, and aided by a little decent cookery, have provided a meal for his entire family; but Tom has an honest and thoroughly English horror of any piece of meat not distinctly traceable to the animal and portion of the animal whence it was hewed. "Likes to know," he says, "whether it's dog or whether it's horse," and abhors all messes and kickshaws as only fit for Frenchmen, who being brought up, and even weaned on frogs, of course know no

better. If his work be not too far off, T. P. indulges in "a pipe and half a screw," and during his dinner-hour is a happy man. Perhaps the only comfortable hour out of his twenty-four is the one spent on the sanded floor of the Cantankerous Crocodile, for his home is not a very cheerful one, poor fellow. The "missis" does her best, good soul, but the "kids" are always teething or having the measles, and as soon as Tommy gets over the croup, Jenny is barking her poor little heart out with the hooping-cough.

Large baskets, resting on the stalwart arms of stout Frenchwomen, come to Newport Market, and are certain to be stored with the cheaper pieces of meat, not forgetting bones for soup-making, eggs, and endless onions, mighty carrots, and crisp heads of celery, peering cunningly from beneath the half-opened basket lid. All this carefully assorted vegetable matter will convert the humble shin of beef into the savoury dishes denounced by our friend T. P. as "messes."

The swine—savoury food of the Saxon—is well represented in Newport Market. For roasting or boiling, either to be served brown and crisp with toothsome crackling, or seethed to serve as an humble handmaiden to the delicate capon or lordly turkey. Sausages in endless rows tempt those admirers within whom faith is not dead; tripe, and eke cow-heel, excite the gastronomic propensities of the boys who hail from "Brummagem." On Wednesdays and Fridays there is a brisk trade doing in tripe. Wholesome and tender tripe is a decided favourite, owing, possibly, to its elastic properties. Deftly prepared with onions and milk, it yields to no food in the world for lightness and digestibility; fried in batter, it makes a more ostentatious dish, while, if cheapness be the main object to be attained, it can be eaten, by a hungry man, cold, as purchased in the tripe-seller's shop. Many years ago, I knew a foreign gentleman (slightly at issue with the powers reigning on the continent of Europe at that time, in consequence of a benevolent project he had once entertained for blowing the Germanic Diet into the air), who generally commenced the day (about two P.M.) with a light repast consisting of a cup of coffee, a cigarette, and a game of chess at a neighbouring cigar-shop, preserving, by this temperate breakfast, an unimpaired appetite for dinner. On tripe days, at the canonical hour of six P.M., he visited the tripe-shop, and selecting a choice morsel of "the double," dined gloriously upon the same, assisted only by a lump of bread, a pinch of salt, and a pint of "aff-naff."

Late on certain evenings the nostrils of the wanderer in Newport Market are assailed by an odour of exceeding savouriness. This hunger-compelling scent proceeds from a singular dish called "faggots," all hot—round lumps compounded, it is believed, chiefly of the interior organs of animals, highly seasoned; the faggot is, indeed, a sort of degenerate Southron imitation of the Scottish national dish, haggis. Hungry children crowd round the steaming dishes of brown and savoury spheres, greedily inhaling the delightful odour, while those happy in the accidental possession of "browns," rush to gratify their appetites in more substantial fashion. Under the flaring gas-lights slipshod girls, carrying basins hidden under their pinafores, bear off triumphantly their supper to the poor home, where probably even such slender meals as "faggots" afford are somewhat scarce.

Hidden away in the dingy regions of Finsbury is a small market, the site whereof is now advertised for sale. The huge board announcing the approaching sale and demolition of the entire institution would in itself produce a depressing effect were it not at once evident that the market has probably nearly abolished itself. If any business were ever done there it must have all been done with long ago. There appears to be very little meat for sale at Finsbury Market, the wealth of its wares seeming rather to consist of stray bunches of attenuated-looking carrots, forlorn turnips, pale with rage at their excessive distance from anything resembling a leg of mutton, and hopeless potatoes, evidently wishing that the sack were closed over their eyes, weary with looking for the customers who never come. On mature reflection I have come to the conclusion that the market is only kept open through downright English adherence to obsolete forms, that the merchants expose a few vegetables for form's sake only, and then consume the dusty carrots, forlorn turnips, and gritty salads themselves. The whole neighbourhood has a weary and seedy air, as if it were tired of the sham, and would be heartily glad of the advent of some newer and stronger organisation.

Let us go on through some sleepy-looking streets till Curtain-road is at last reached, and here it seems at the first blush as if the entire population were about to undertake the operation known as "shooting

the moon." Furniture in the roads, furniture in the pathways, furniture in passages. Everywhere nothing but chairs and sofas, ready packed for travelling. On closer inspection, however, it turns out that all this furniture is entirely new, and that furniture is the staple product of this remote region. Shoreditch Church now heaves in sight, and a little beyond it is a very imposing pile of building in the Italian Gothic style. This is Columbia Market, built at an immense expense by the Baroness Burdett Coutts, and by that munificent lady presented a few weeks since to the corporation of the City of London.

London is famous for its surprises: elegant churches buried in reeking slums, and ambitious mausoleums rearing their heads in the back yards of dismal, gaunt-looking warehouses, are common enough, but the traveller is scarcely prepared for so rich an architectural apparition as Columbia Market in the dreary regions of Shoreditch. Its construction came about in this wise. Some few years ago, during the reign of Sir Richard Mayne, that autocrat issued a ukase, decreeing the virtual abolition of the costermonger. The kerbstone business was henceforth to cease. The coster himself was to share the fate of the "Charley," and such like old world entities, he, his fur cap, his highlows, his plush waistcoat, glittering with pearl buttons, his short-pipe, his "kingsman," his "Whitechapel brougham" and his "Jerusalem pony," were to be relegated to the limbo of extinct institutions. The Baroness Burdett Coutts at once extended her warmest sympathy to the poor fellows who were to be suddenly deprived of the only livelihood they were capable of earning.

Much marvelling "where the poor donkeys lived," this charitable lady decided on building a market, which should, by removing the kerbstone traffic to one central spot, enable the poor itinerant retailer to sell his little stock of rabbits, fish, or vegetables without falling under the ban of the police. The present site was selected, a network of dirty streets and noisome alleys disappeared as if by magic, and the new market was commenced in earnest. No sooner was that market fairly begun than, with the consistency and steadiness of purpose so eminently characteristic of our police magnates, the late czar rescinded his severe edict, and the costermonger, endowed with a fresh lease of life, knotted his kingsman round his brawny throat, hitched his much-enduring donkey to his barrow, and proclaimed the excellence of his wares in louder and hoarser tones than ever. Meanwhile the designs for the market assumed grander proportions, and a stately structure astonished the eyes of the natives of Shoreditch and Bethnal Green.

The original benevolent purpose of the noble founder being rendered abortive, the building was continued on a more ambitious scale than had been intended, and the present handsome structure was opened as a general market, on April the 28th, 1869. A large quadrangle for the wholesale dealers was enclosed by handsome Gothic houses, shops for retailers, and pretty arched colonnades, with abundant stone benches, probably for the accommodation of "loafers" generally. The market was opened, it is true, and only required two elements to insure success, that is, buyers and sellers. Nobody took anything there to sell, and if he had done so nobody would have gone there to buy it; the costermonger preferred, as an astute man of business, his regular beat, regular customers, and certain profits; the few adventurous spirits who had speculated to the extent of taking shops or stands, gave it up as a bad job, and in too many cases "skedaddled," in defiance of the laws of landlord and tenant.

Proving an utter failure as a retail market, the Columbia building was reopened as a wholesale fish market, on February the 21st, 1870, and dragged on a languid existence till a short time ago, when the generous baroness handed over the entire property, costing little less than three hundred thousand pounds, to the corporation, engaging herself to build, at a further cost of sixty thousand pounds, a tramway to the terminus of the Eastern Counties Railway. It is not altogether impossible that when the tramway is completed (within two years hence), Columbia Market, in the hands of the City authorities, will become a formidable rival, if not the absolute successor of Billingsgate. The railway connexion with Harwich being made perfect, fishing-sloops will be able to discharge their cargoes at that port into railway cars running straight from Harwich into the market itself, thus saving all the time occupied in the tedious voyage up the Thames. The great bogy, Vested Interest, will rear his head on high, fight his hardest to defeat this project, and raise innumerable difficulties, according to custom, but the direct communication with Harwich

once established, the great advantages of the new market will soon be made manifest.

I wonder what the effect of such a change will be on the manners and customs of the whilom frequenters of Billingsgate! Will the refining and elevating influence of an Italian Gothic building do aught to remove that singular loudness of tongue and asperity of manner for which Billingsgate is justly notorious? Will that fine old vernacular, rich in expletives, apt for repartee, become, like ancient Cornish, one of the lost tongues? Will the rough tongue of the ancient dweller in the fish market wax smooth and soft, under the shadow of Mr. Darbyshire's airy spires and graceful arches? It will afford an interesting study for Professor Max Müller to watch the gradual softening of the coarser oaths at present in use to the mild or Mantalini style of execration, and, finally, to note the entire extinction of "cussin" generally, thanks to the happy application of æsthetic architecture.

In Church-street, Marylebone, over against the Marylebone, or Royal Alfred Theatre, is held on Fridays, not the largest, but certainly the most miscellaneous market in London. Such a wonderful omnium gatherum of all imaginable articles necessary or unnecessary, useful or pernicious, does not exist within the bounds of our wide metropolis.

Provender for man and beast—sweet-smelling hay and prime marbled wing-ribs of beef, second-hand clothes and saddles of mutton, Cheshire cheese and rusty ironmongery, crisp, curly savoys and blonde chignons, mellow pears and second-hand stewpans, white-hearted celery and black American or pink Chinese radishes, watercresses and fireworks, humming-tops, ripe apples, bows and arrows and blacking, rump-steaks, needles, and fire-irons, candles and crockery, fresh butter and the last popular ballad, hoop-skirts, eggs and artificial flowers, boots, bulbs, and piping bullfinches, hot sausages and pea-jackets, pens, paper, envelopes, and hair brushes, virgin vinegar and vermin-destroyer, quaint beer jugs, green broom, wooden skewers, looking-glasses, chickweed and groundsel for your singing-birds, chairs and corduroys, pigeons and potatoes, geese, green sage and ropes of onions, mutton pies and Dundee marmalade, pictures and pickles, tripe, trotters, and tectotal tracts—the latter, it may be remarked, inculcating principles much at variance with the practice of the neighbourhood. The sale of these small wares is not effected without protracted negotiations, torrents of chaff, and so much wild vociferation (richly garnished with potent adjectives), that the exhausted purchasers are often reduced to the necessity of making straight for the nearest public-house, then and there to recruit their exhausted energies with "a drain." Numerous idlers are vouchsafing the sanction of their presence—members, mostly, of that mysterious class defined in the police-sheet as labourers—labourers who, most probably, have been out of work for the last twenty years or thereabouts.

One of a group clustered on the pathway outside a public-house near this market once gave the writer a wondrous surprise. This ill-favoured loafer detached himself from his "pals," and followed me through all my peregrinations among butchers' shops and toffy stalls, till I began to weary of his undesirable attention. When I stopped to observe a knot of old women haggling over a shawl, and handling that rather tender garment so roughly as to render imminent an immediate solution of continuity, he stopped also. While I was attentively considering the singing-birds, he was attentively considering me. Having up to the moment of writing escaped incarceration for any penal offence, I was at a loss to imagine where I could have met my too persistent follower—he haunted me like a very ill-looking shadow, and pursued me even along Church-street itself. Resolved to shake him off, I quickened my pace, and suddenly missed my escort—he had disappeared—not into a gin-shop, but a bookseller's. He presently emerged with a paper in his hand, and walked rapidly away. Mechanically I felt my pockets—conscious as I was of their emptiness, and then, being suddenly attacked with a fit of curiosity, plunged into the bookseller's and inquired what work my burglarious-looking friend had purchased. It was The Christian Year!

TAKEN ON TRIAL.

Any one who has once passed through the principal streets of Southampton need have no difficulty in predicting the style of persons certain to be found therein on the occasion of his next visit. The floating population there varies daily, but it has always the same characteristics, and it must

continue to retain them, until, in the course of events, the great commercial maritime companies select some other port as the spot whence their splendid steam fleets shall be despatched, where their vast stores shall be warehoused, and where the large contingent of men and women of all ranks who are dependent on them shall be quartered and domiciled. Until that day arrives you shall continue, even in the short time occupied by your transit from the railway to the docks, to meet with brown-faced ayahs shivering with the cold, and staring wildly about them; with blonde, blue-bloused Teutons, with their frousy wives and dirty children, emigrating to America, as deck passengers, in one of the steamers of the North German line; with jabbering Jew slop-sellers, jewellers, outfitters, and pawnbrokers, who, if one may judge from the number of Hebraic names, more or less disguised, to be met with throughout the town, must do a large business in Southampton. Nor will you fail to find many officers of the commercial marine, stalwart, bronzed, and trim; many A. B.'s very much décolletés, with hats so far on the back of their heads as to give the appearance of a nimbus as seen in the old pictures of saints, with very loose trousers and rolling gait; many smart yachtsmen, who are to the sailors what all amateurs are to all professionals, as mock turtle to real; a few soldiers, and many loungers and loafers of the usual pattern. Make your way through this heterogeneous multitude, pass through the dockyard gates, keep clear of these rolling tubs, which are viscous and sticky, and probably full of palm-oil just brought home from Africa, put your best foot forward and make for yon flight of steps, at the top of which are standing some of the friends who are about to take us on trial, the trial on which we are to be taken being the trial trip of the screw steamer Hooghly, just built for the Peninsular and Oriental Company by Messrs. M'Whirter, of Greenock. Salutations are exchanged, we and our fellow-passengers in the same carriage from London descend into a small boat, and five minutes after pushing off from the shore, we are ascending the lowered gangway of the Hooghly as she lies in mid stream in Southampton water, with her steam up, ready for a start.

As the splendid ship glides through the smooth water, leaving the "two friendly spires of Southampton," the sight of which made Major Dobbin's heart beat so wildly on his return from India, far behind, passing Hythe and Netley, and emerging into something like blue water when Calshot Castle is at our backs, and the glorious Wight before us; as we inhale the delicious fresh air, mark the dancing waves, see the verdure-clothed cliffs, and the trim villas dotted here and there amongst them; or glide quickly past the beach where the bathers, the sand-diggers, and the promenaders can be discovered engaged in their holiday pastime, we begin to think that there may be in life even a greater pleasure than drawing legal deeds, there may be in England a more picturesque spot than Brick-court, Temple. All the Londoners present seem to be of similar opinion. The chairman of the company, whenever he is not engaged in courteously attending to his guests, seems bent upon inhaling through mouth and nostrils every possible particle of health-giving ozone. The directors, stern, unbending men of business in the City, pillars of the Stock Exchange, fathers of Lloyd's, elder brothers of the Trinity House, have put on wideawake hats which do not fit them, and borrowed telescopes, through which they see nothing but one round white disc; while some of the boldest among them are actually smoking. The two newspaper reporters who have been sent down "to do the trial" seem to be old acquaintances of the purser, under whose auspices they are already engaged in drinking brandy and soda-water, a process which they humourously designate as "splicing the mainbrace," and in talking over their recent and prospective engagements. The rest of the company are dispersed about, some sitting under the awning reading the morning papers; some, under the guidance of the officers, making a tour of inspection of the ship, peering into and praising the neatly appointed little sleeping-rooms (all the time inwardly congratulating themselves that they are not going to occupy them), or looking at the enormous engines, ever oscillating, leaping forward, and drawing back, ever threatening to crush the shiny-faced, greasy-jacketed man, who, with oil-can in one hand and flannel swab in the other, walks unharmed among them, ministering to their necessities and tending them as though they were human creatures in whom he had an interest. Meanwhile, the captain, the chief engineer, the Southampton superintendent, and the Admiralty officials, are gathered together in a little knot on the bridge, and are interchanging mutual congratulations, for the Hooghly has run the measured mile at Stokes Bay at more than

the average speed; her build, engines, and appointments are all pronounced to be first-class, and leaving Spithead and Portsmouth Harbour behind us, she is steaming away for her pleasure trip round the Isle of Wight. Soon in the distance we see the pier at Ryde, gay with brilliant parasols and female finery, and while we are straining our eyes to catch the first glimpse of Shanklin Chine, the word is passed round that dinner is ready, and the company generally adjourns below. Ah! the enormous joints of cold roast and boiled, the meat pie, manufactured especially by the cook of the Nubia, who happens to be on shore, and who is such a hand at such confection. Ah! the curry, staple dish in the P. and O. cuisine, with its rice so deftly boiled, and its sauce so cunningly concocted, that one ceases to wonder of what animal its component parts ever formed a portion! Ah! the speeches after dinner, the parliamentary-like eloquence of the chairman, the bland suavity of the government officials, and the broad Scotch accent in which at immense length Mr. M'Whirter will give details of the building of the ship. Then, the cigar on deck in the calm evening, the charming view of Alum Bay and the Needles, and the return to Southampton in time for the last train to town.

Go, my friend, but let me linger! Of an inquisitive turn, I have been chatting with the superintendent, who has given me a certain amount of information about the affairs of this company, whose guests we have been, and has promised to initiate me into some of the mysteries of the manner in which its enormous organisation is satisfactorily managed and controlled.

Enormous organisation, truly, for the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company possesses a fleet far superior to that of many a so-called maritime power, undertakes and carries through successfully vast contracts which government would infallibly bungle, has, at every eastern port of any consequence, depôts and stations, each manned by a large and thoroughly trustworthy staff, all dependent on the general supervision of Leadenhall-street, and all working in one harmonious whole. The amount of capital with which in shares and debentures the P. and O. Company has to deal, is between three and four millions. Its property consists of a fleet of steamships forty-six in number, measuring by Customs register one hundred and two thousand seven hundred and three tons, and fitted with machinery of nineteen thousand nine hundred and ninety horse-power; steam-tugs measuring nine hundred and sixty-four tons and three hundred and thirty-three horse-power; sailing transports, store and coal ships, measuring five thousand four hundred and eighty-two tons; also property on shore consisting of freehold and leasehold houses, offices, docks, wharves, coaling depôts, factories and repairing establishments in this country and at Bombay, Hong-Kong, Shanghai, Singapore, Calcutta, Point de Galle, Aden, Suez, Alexandria, Malta, and other places; and stocks of coals, and marine, victualling, and other stores in depôt and in transit to these stations, the whole showing a value of upwards of three million five hundred thousand pounds, as stated in the last annual report. In order that this vast amount of capital may be properly applied, and to provide for the due superintendence and execution of the work undertaken by the company, fourteen principal and subsidiary establishments have to be kept up. Many of these are in parts of the world unfavourable to the health of Europeans, and the rates of remuneration to the superintendent, clerks, storekeepers, engineers, and artisans of all trades are high in proportion.

At the present time the company have in active service:

On shore:			
Agents and superintendents ...	26	Brought forward	275
European clerks and assistants	194	European mechanics and labourers ...	378
Native clerks ...	55	Native mechanics and labourers ...	1084
Carried forward	275	Total	1737
Afloat:			
Commanders ...	55	Brought forward	2099
Officers	229	Carpenters ...	36
Surgeons... ...	43	Boatswains ...	43
Pursers	26	Quartermasters and gunners	145
Clerks in charge	8	Able seamen ...	470
Pursers' clerks ...	17	Ordinary seamen	277
Engineers ...	253	Native seamen...	1387
Boiler-makers ...	31	European stewards	473
European firemen	507	Native stewards	301
Native ,,	930		
Carried forward	2099	Total	5231
Afloat			5231
On shore			1737
		Total	6968

The above takes no account of the coal labourers and coolies employed at various stations in coaling operations.

The consumption of coal necessarily forms a conspicuous item in the company's accounts. A return extending over ten years, 1856 to 1865, both inclusive, showed

that the enormous sum of five millions and a quarter was paid for fuel only during that period, or on the average five hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds per annum. It must be remembered that the tendency of price during the last few years has been, and is still, to advance, and that coal deteriorates very much in hot climates, where, as stated by a competent witness, "it is very difficult to keep it so useful and so good, and it must be calculated that we require one-fourth more coal to do the same quantity of work." An average number of one hundred and seventy sailing ships is engaged annually in conveying coal to the company's stations.

The commissariat is another department which has to be anxiously looked after, and which, more than any other, affords a fertile source of complaint. The manner in which a ship should be handled is a technical matter, and there is probably not one in a thousand of the company's passengers in a position to comment upon the seamanship displayed by the captain or the crew. But there is no outgoing "griff," no home returning "Qui-hi," who does not feel himself not merely competent to judge of, but bound to find fault with, the food placed before him, and who complains most bitterly if on board ship he does not meet with all the delicacies of the season, just as they would be served to him at the "Rag," in London, or the Byculla Club in Bombay. One of the greatest difficulties in providing a proper commissariat arises in the immense length of the company's lines. A steamer leaving Southampton for Alexandria can take in live and dead stock, poultry, fish, &c., of the best quality, and passengers will be struck with the style of table which a clever purser, assisted by good cooks and experienced stewards, is able to keep. But on the other side of the Isthmus of Suez, three-fourths of the stores have to be sent from England and kept in depôt before they are issued to the steamers. Live stock (sheep excepted) and poultry are very inferior, and passengers whose appetites have been destroyed by many years residence in the tropics, are scarcely to be tempted even by the best of preserved meats, fish, and vegetables. It will scarcely be believed that by the P. and O. Company alone upwards of ten thousand persons are fed daily on board ship, but when that is taken into account, the enormous amounts included in their annual summary of stores will not appear excessive. Under the head of general stores, expended from September, 1864, to the same month in 1865, we find a total in weight of fourteen million six hundred and two thousand five hundred and fourteen pounds. Of this total, bread, flour, &c., represented one million two hundred and sixty-two thousand four hundred and eighty-one pounds, vegetables two millions five hundred and ninety-three thousand three hundred and ninety-seven pounds, and ice three millions forty-six thousand and four pounds. This last item is one which demands special mention. Of ice, the company now consumes between fourteen and fifteen hundred tons per annum, costing in manufacture or by purchase between seven and eight thousand pounds. Twenty years ago this luxury was not looked for on board ship, and the Indian passenger would gladly have paid liberally for a supply. He now expects his cool beverage as a matter of course, and the exhaustion of the ice-house, on a voyage, is made a matter of grievous complaint. Going back to our summary we find that during the year we have quoted the consumption of wines, spirits, beer, &c., was one million three hundred and one thousand six hundred and eight bottles. Of these beverages, pale ale was by far the most popular, the consumption being five hundred and twenty-four thousand two hundred and fifty bottles; then came porter, one hundred and sixty-six thousand one hundred and nine bottles; soda-water, one hundred and thirty-two thousand four hundred and twenty-eight bottles; claret, one hundred and twenty-three thousand and fifty-nine bottles; sherry, one hundred and two thousand seven hundred and eleven bottles. In the same year nearly six hundred oxen, one thousand four hundred sheep, four hundred pigs, and one hundred and seventy thousand head of poultry, were sacrificed for the consumption of the company.

Although the head-quarters of the Peninsular and Oriental Company are, and have been, since its establishment thirty years ago, situate in London, the focus of its business may be said to be at Southampton. There its steamers arrive, and thence they depart; there are its stores, warehouses, artisans' shops, and depôts for the heterogeneous mass of articles with which its stations throughout the eastern hemisphere have to be supplied. Under the guidance of the superintendent I go through these various establishments, which are situate in the immediate vicinity of the docks, and am

made acquainted with the manner of their organisation and administration. And, first, we are taken to the linen stores, through which all linen, whether new or old, belonging to the company, must pass before it is sent out to the ships. New linen, coming straight from the manufacturer, towels, pillow-cases, sheets, table-cloths, and napkins are all sent here to be stamped with the company's well-known cipher (the rising sun with the "Quis separabit" motto), a process which is so effectually performed that even when the ink has worn away the mark of the stamp still remains. Then, tied up in bundles, it is sent down the lift into the carts expecting it in the yard below, and carried to Shirley, a village a few miles off. Returned thence duly washed, the linen is placed in the drying-room, where it is thoroughly aired by means of the hot-water pipes with which the apartment is permeated, and thence distributed to the ships from which application for it has been received. Here in this linen-room things are on a no less gigantic scale than in the other portions of the establishment. The superintendent showed me an estimate of the quantities of material, linen, calico, huckaback, &c., which would be required during the coming year to supply the foreign agencies, and five new ships, and the amount was close upon one hundred and thirty-three thousand yards. When a ship arrives in port, all its linen is at once sent to the store, where it is opened and examined, to see what repairing is required. There are three or four women always employed in darning, and nearly a score in hemming and preparing the new linen for the ships. It is done up in bundles, two hundred and fifty of each article in every bundle, and stored away in an enormous closet fitted with racks. Here I was shown two thousand table-napkins, which had just arrived from Dunfermline, whence the table-linen is generally procured, the blankets and sheets coming from London. Now to the upholsterers' store, where ten men and several women are constantly at work. Here are made up all the beds and the cabin sofas, the wool pinned and carded, the sofas stuffed with horsehair prepared at the company's own manufactory. Old sofas and beds are sent here to be pulled to pieces and cleaned. New carpets and curtains (all carpets, curtains, stuffs, &c., come from London, from certain houses, and at certain prices, and are all of the same pattern) are sent here to be hemmed, stitched, and fitted. Next to the pattern shop, where are the gauges for the different ships, templets, paddle-centres, valves, serving mallets, teeth for cog-wheels, and fire-bars of all sizes. But it is in the marine-store shop, which we visit next, that we find the most miscellaneous collection. Here are immense rolls of canvas, stocks of fire-irons, enormous coils of fire-hose, thousands of gallons of paint, kettle-handles, knobs, spouts, and ears, barometers, sheet-glass, grindstones, handspikes, curtain-rings and rods, hammocks, disinfecting fluid, emery-powder, mops, oars, torches, rat-traps, mast-head and bull's-eye lamps, drawer-knobs, ropes and hawsers of all sizes, pig-iron in hundredweights, locks in hundreds, nails in thousands, all kinds of bunting and special flags, cork fenders, lamp-wicks, and a curious composition known as "soojee muttee." When a ship arrives in harbour, application for whatever she wants is made to the marine-store shop, whence it is issued over the counter, after being subjected to a double system of check and counter-check. And it is a noticeable portion of the plan in operation here, that none of the packages in which articles of whatever kind are originally supplied to the P. and O. Company are retained by them. They are sent back whence they came, and are returned re-filled. This is advantageous to both parties, the company not having to provide space for use of lumber, and the suppliers having constantly renewed use of their property.

In addition to what I have already mentioned, there are pursers' supply stores, where are to be found in stock all the glass and china, knives and forks, cruets, together with oats, barley, bran, peas, preserved meats, soups, &c., for the ships' supply; the joiners' shop, where are manufactured the towel-horses, the bed-posts, the chairs, staircase rails, &c.; the painters' shops where they are painted and varnished; the bonded warehouse, where are stored the wines and spirits, the tea and sugar, in bond; the cooperage and bottling establishment, and the sail-loft, where several old tars, who have spent the best part of their lives in the company's service, are to be found mending the sails which their successors are to handle. Throughout the whole length and breadth of the establishment one cannot fail to be impressed with the admirable system which prevails, and which seems to insure a maximum of result with a minimum of discomfort to those by whom the work is performed.

And, although occasional depression of stock and reduction of dividend are naturally trying to the temper of shareholders, though A and B have each their indubitable remedy for what appear to them to be shortcomings and mismanagement, though Y could build the ships, and Z could man them, at half the present expense, there is little doubt that the P. and O. Company has, for the thirty odd years of its existence, been as highly thought of both by the government, whose contractor it is, and the public who are its customers, as by us, whom it has so obligingly taken on trial.

LELGARDE'S INHERITANCE.

IN TWELVE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER IX.

THERE was a long, long silence between us two, a silence, on my part, of bitter, angry disappointment. Let those who have never felt poverty despise me for dreading a return to it. I am not ashamed to own that the thought was gall and wormwood to me: though not for my own sake, Heaven knows.

"Perhaps he is dead," I said, at last; I could not help it; but Lelgarde stood with a brighter light in her eye and a deeper flush on her cheek than I had seen for many a day, and her first words took me by surprise.

"Thank God!" she said, heartily; then, in answer to my looks, I suppose: "Yes, thank God, the mystery is out; the wretched feeling I have had is gone."

She turned to the half-finished picture which we had hung on the wall, the picture in which the fair feeble face, with its light-hearted look, was piteous, when one thought of that poor weak child's after life.

"Rest in peace," Lelgarde said, solemnly; "the wrong shall be right at last. Oh! I thank God, I do thank him that I am freed from this crime, this injustice; and now, Joan, what is to be done?"

"These other papers may afford some clue, perhaps," conscience forced me to say.

"I hope so." And thereupon she sat down on a footstool, and spread out on her lap the papers, nine or ten in number, which the secret recess had contained. There were one or two letters written in a bold, manly hand, and in a tone to match, from the young husband evidently, though only the initials were signed. It was plain that a naturally honourable, straight-forward man had been hurried, by an overpowering passion, into an act for which he heartily despised himself. There were earnest entreaties that he might be allowed to reveal the marriage, exhortations to courage and plain-dealing; keen self-reproach at the part which he had played, and an almost contemptuous dashing aside of the feeble arguments in favour of secrecy with which his bride evidently answered him. Then there were brief directions as to her sojourn by the seaside, and the arrangements for the birth of the expected babe, and there was one letter, the last, written after the child's birth, and just as he was about to start on his Swiss journey, which thus concluded: "When you tell me that to own our marriage would kill your father, I can say no more; but that danger once removed, not an hour shall pass before I claim my wife and child in the face of day." No wonder this letter was blistered with tears. We found other letters too, addressed, not to Miss Hilda, but to Nurse Oliphant; these were in stiff writing and bookish English, evidently written by some one to whom a letter was a great and unusual effort. They announced the arrival of "the child you are interested in," and alluded to certain arrangements for its comfort as mentioned previously. There was one more paper of melancholy interest, the slip from the Times containing the account of the accident by which Henry Hamilton lost his life; and there was a bundle of receipts, all addressed to Nurse Oliphant, for the sum of two hundred pounds, evidently paid yearly, for the maintenance of the luckless boy. These went on to the time when nurse's and Miss Hilda's death occurred within a few days of each other, now about ten years since. Lelgarde eagerly pointed out the signature, "Gideon Hatterick," and the date, "The Coombe Farm, near Hollyfield."

"That is what I wanted. Where is it? Somewhere in Devonshire or Cornwall, I think. I will look it out in Bradshaw, and we will start at once."

"Gently, my dear," I said, for she looked far too much excited to act calmly and sanely just then, "you must take advice before you do anything."

There was a tap at the door, and the astonished face of the young kitchen-maid who entered reminded us that in our absorption we had allowed church-time to pass, and that all the servants were gone.

"Mr. Seymour Kennedy, ma'am," she said; "but I wasn't sure you was in."

"Oh! show him in," cried Lelgarde, in an eager tone, and she rushed out to meet him at the door, her hands still full of papers, with what he evidently took for delighted welcome.

"The very person I wanted!" she cried, eagerly; "come in; I want advice. You will give it me."

I tried to signal caution to her, but it was thrown away; she held out her hand, and he took license to hold it in his, as indeed she almost led him into the drawing-room. I never saw his disagreeable face show so much genuine satisfaction as it did at that moment. I could have shaken Lelgarde for the impression which I saw she was creating.

"I am so glad I came," he said in the soft voice that irritated me; "I was hoping to waylay you as usual in the lane; and when you did not come, I took alarm, and could not help coming to ask if anything was amiss."

"Providence sent you!" said Lelgarde, rather melodramatically.

"Well, I at least shall give Providence a vote of thanks," he answered in a tone which chilled her high-wrought enthusiasm, and she subsided with a blush; seeing which, he spoke still more gently. "Now will you tell me in what I can serve you? I think I need not talk about the pleasure it will give me," and he glanced at me as much as to say "go," to which I replied with a look expressing, "not if I know it."

"Read those," said Lelgarde, and placed the papers in his hands. I watched his countenance narrowly as he read, but it is unnecessary to say that my scrutiny was entirely thrown away. Coolly he read them one by one, and laid them down in regular order; coolly he folded them up again, and then said:

"Well, this is annoying—very."

In spite of my own previous reflections that it was annoying—very—I felt irate with him.

"What ought she to do, do you think?" I asked tartly enough.

"Well; I should hope there may not be much trouble about the matter. There is no proof that the youth is alive; still less that he ever knew his own identity. It is for him to advance the claim; and after all he may not be able to establish it."

Lelgarde had quite regained her self-possession; she spoke with quiet dignity.

"I will take care that there is no difficulty about that; only how to set about finding him?"

"You promised to be guided by my advice, you know; and my advice is—do nothing at present. Wait—take time—look about you; there is at all events no immediate call for action."

Up went my Lelgarde's head.

"You hardly grasp the question, I think," she said.

Mr. Kennedy smiled at the idea, and answered as if she had been a child.

"You must help me then. What is it I do not grasp?"

"You do not realise that every moment I spend here, as mistress of this place, I am adding to the cruel wrong that has gone on so much too long already. No immediate call for action? When for months I have been enjoying what is not my own. Oh! if you knew!"

She stopped—flushed, agitated—not to him could she hint at all that she had suffered.

"We will talk of this when you are calmer," he said in the same soothing voice; "I shall probably be here again in a few weeks—and I—I need hardly say how glad I shall be to serve you. Till we do meet again, let me entreat of you to take no compromising steps."

Lelgarde did not answer; and shortly afterwards Mr. Kennedy wished us good-bye, leaving on my mind a curious impression that, without a cold look, or an uncourteous word, he had been offensive. Not a word, not a look of his could have been found fault with; and yet I felt quite sure of two things—that he thought Lelgarde's warm welcome was due to her prospect of being penniless, and that he was not the man to interest himself in a penniless woman.

"I will have no more of lawyers," Lelgarde cried, impatiently, when he was gone. "Mr. Graves? Yes, Mr. Graves may be consulted by-and-bye, perhaps, but surely, now, you and I can act for ourselves, Joan. We will go to Hollyfield to-morrow."

And she lost no time in setting about our preparations; examining train papers, and giving orders to the astonished Mrs. Bracebridge. No one who saw her that day, all eager interest, and noted her clear-headed and prompt arrangements, could have identified her with the drooping, pining girl, who had lately gone moping about the house. Not once did her spirits flag. We went to the afternoon service, and there, when my stubborn old spirit was inwardly growling at Providence, I saw her sweet face uplifted in real thankfulness.

Only when we left the church a little tinge of melancholy seemed to steal over her. The days were lengthening fast, and something of daylight lingered still. She passed her arm through mine, silently led me up a path through the plantations, which brought us to the top of a knoll behind the house. Athelstanes lay below us, a grey mass of building. The red light in the sitting-rooms was shining out comfortably in the growing darkness; the cows were walking in slow procession from the milking-shed to the paddock; the garden showed traces of Lelgarde's design for spring beauties. She turned to me with a rather wistful smile.

"Come and gone! Mine has been a strange, short reign, has it not?"

I could not answer. I felt the necessity of being angry with somebody, and thought vindictively of the poor feeble creature, whose selfish weakness had left this legacy of doubt and disappointment behind her, the unfaithful sister, the undutiful daughter, the weak wife who dared not own her husband, the cowardly mother who forsook her sucking child.

"God forgive her!" I said, in as Christian a manner as people generally offer that prayer.

But Lelgarde answered earnestly, "Yes, God forgive her!" And silence fell between us.

Her next words startled me a little.

"Joan, do you remember how they brought us here the first day to have a view of the old house? Ah, me! Harry Goldie may become a great artist, but it is not here that he will visit me. Come, let us go home," she added immediately, and all the evening she was very silent—the reaction, doubtless, from the morning's excitement.

She sat on the hearth-rug, as she often used to do, gazing into the depths of the fire, till I asked if she was reading her fortune there.

"No," she answered, smiling, "I was thinking what silly things day-dreams are."

"A truism, my dear."

"Especially when they concern other people. Most likely what one would plan for them would be very little to their taste."

"Probably."

After a long pause, as if beginning quite another subject, she said abruptly:

"I fancy men have a singular dislike to any obligation."

"They like money, though—no matter how they get it," I said.

"Do they? They do not care for their wives to bring the money, I fancy—not nice men."

"Are you thinking of Mr. Seymour Kennedy?" I could not help asking.

She raised her eyes to mine in amazement.

"Of Mr. Seymour Kennedy? Certainly not. I was not thinking of any one in particular."

And therewith we both became silent, and continued so till the butler came in with our bedroom candles.

The next morning we started early, slept on the road, and before noon on the following day found ourselves at the little hill-town of Catcombe, the nearest station to the village of Hollyfield.

CHAPTER X.

The fly at Catcombe was not to be had, but after considerable demur a shandredan of some sort was obtained, driven by a flushed rustic in fustian and velveteen. The population gathered in the street to see us start, and we felt ourselves public characters for once in our lives. But Lelgarde at least forgot herself, almost forgot the errand on which she came, in the loveliness that surrounded us when once we left the little town.

From the moment we started we were gradually mounting, and before long a thickly wooded bank rose on our right; on our left was a descent as thickly wooded, ending in a little noisy brook that sparkled out into the light, now and then, a dash of white in the tender April green. A long ascent brought us out on a heathery common, whence we could see all around, over hill and dale, to the sea; and then we began to descend.

"I can see no sign of a house, and yet I suppose Hollyfield is not far off," said Lelgarde; and, even as she spoke, there opened out in the glade below a little cluster of houses round a church and parsonage. No safer nook could certainly have been chosen wherein to bury a secret. Our driver touched his hat, and looked for orders.

"To the parsonage," said Lelgarde, decidedly.

She was very pale, her lips compressed, evidently a little nervous, but self-possessed nevertheless. For myself, I own I felt as if we were pulling the string of a shower-bath. The parsonage, a little ivy-covered thatched cottage, stood close to the churchyard wall; and at the garden gate we got out, and walked up to the door. A round-eyed, rosy-cheeked maid-servant gazed at us

in surprise, and seemed doubtful what to say, when Lelgarde asked if we could speak to the clergyman.

"Or to Mrs.——, to his wife?" she was obliged to end, not knowing what name to mention.

"Ha 'ant got n'ar a one," was the answer; and then, stepping back and knocking at a door, the damsel proclaimed aloud: "Zur, zur, if you please, zur, here be two ladies a come."

I think Lelgarde began to realise that her quest had its awkwardnesses; but she stood her ground with upraised head and quiet, fearless look, a match, as she always was, for all merely human encounters. But we were both relieved, I think, when the clergyman, emerging from his study, proved to be a venerable, silver-haired gentleman of benevolent aspect.

"In what can I serve you? Will you walk in?" he said, politely; and we entered his study, a room in truly bachelor-like disorder, littered with books and papers. Very shy and uncomfortable he looked, and I could not help feeling that we were probably taken for well-got-up beggars of intrusive manners.

Lelgarde began, her voice gathering firmness as she went on.

"I am come to ask if you can give me any information about a child, at least a youth—I suppose—a young man"—(the rector looked alarmed)—"who was brought up, I believe, by some people of the name of Hatterick, at a place called the Coombe Farm, in your parish?"

"Poor Henry Hamilton?" said the clergyman, looking surprised, and much interested.

Lelgarde met the look with one more eager.

"Yes. Oh, that is the person I mean. Where is he?" And she looked ready to start up and fly to him.

The old parson shook his head.

"If you could tell me that, my dear young lady, you would make me a very happy old man," he said, feelingly.

"Is he dead?" I found myself asking; and I suppose the tone was peculiar; for both my listeners looked at me in surprise.

"No," the old man said—(his name was Benson, as we found out afterwards)—"no, I trust not; but where he is, or how he is faring, God knows—the God of the orphan," he murmured, almost to himself.

"Will you please tell me about him. It is not for nothing that I ask," Lelgarde said.

He smiled at the childish emphasis on the imploring "please," and looked into her young face with sudden kindness.

"You know him, then?" he said.

"No," she answered, blushing a little, "but I believe him to be a relation of my own; I think I know who he is. Unless I can find him I shall be very, very unhappy."

"You know who he is!" cried the old man, eagerly; then, checking himself, "but I see you want to hear all I can tell you before you tell your story. It is not much. I came to the parish—let me see—four-and-twenty years ago; and at that time I believe young Hamilton was at the farm, a little infant, under Mrs. Hatterick's care. Mrs. Hatterick was a good woman."

He paused, musing; there was a misty, unpractical look in his mild blue eye, which, connected with the untidy room and the loaded writing-table, made me set him down as a dreamer and a scribbler more than a worker. His next words confirmed my idea.

"I suppose most old people feel that they have not done as much good in the world as they might; but this is my case, especially when I think of that poor lad. There has always been a mystery about him, and perhaps I ought to have made it my business to try to clear it up, and ascertain if there was any wrong-doing in the matter; but I am not clever at finding the right moment for beginning things—and then it is too late."

"You knew him?" I suggested, as he showed signs of going off into a reverie of self-reproach.

"Knew him? Poor lad, he used to come to me every day from the time he was seven years old to be taught his Latin and English, and such smatterings in general as I could give him. Mrs. Hatterick was a just woman, and while she lived the boy had his due."

"Do you know who paid for his maintenance?" asked Lelgarde.

"Somebody paid, and pretty regularly; a respectable-looking old person used to come at long intervals to visit the farm; but I rather think she was merely an agent for other people. I cannot tell. The boy himself led as happy a life as a boy could lead during his growing-up; even after Mrs. Hatterick died, he held his own well enough, though Gideon Hatterick is a rough man."

"Why did he go away?—for I gather that he is gone," said Lelgarde.

"Ah! that is what I blame myself for; my unhappily dilatory, absent habits," said

Mr. Benson, with a sigh. "Poor youth, he trusted me, and would always have been guided by me. He was, it may be, fourteen or fifteen years old when Gideon Hatterick came to ask my advice, saying that the income paid for young Hamilton's maintenance had suddenly ceased. It had been paid either in person by the woman I told you of, or in bank-notes sent by post, generally from London; so that they had no clue."

"Did not she—that person—ever give any account of the child?" asked Lelgarde eagerly.

"She stated, I believe, that both his parents were dead, and that this annuity would be paid as long as no questions were asked. It seemed a common story enough——" He hesitated and coloured like a girl; then went on: "The lad had always been treated more or less as a gentleman, as indeed he deserved to be; he associated chiefly with two young nephews of mine, who were living with me at that time. I exhorted Gideon Hatterick to keep him in the same way for awhile, and let the youth look about him; Gideon was well-to-do, and could afford it; and I think he loved Hamilton; indeed, we all did, for he was a noble-natured fellow, and full of talent too, poor lad. Just at that time one of my own dear boys fell sick, and I had to leave this place to a curate, and take him to winter in Italy—he had nobody but me."

"And what happened?" I ventured to ask, as the pause grew long.

"Ah! here comes the sad part. My poor young nephew grew worse and worse—in the spring I had to leave him there—in foreign soil—my poor lad. The last few weeks I never left him; I was more absorbed in him than any human creature has a right to be in any one exclusive thing. When, after the funeral, I brought myself to open the packet of letters that had been accumulating, I found one from poor young Hamilton, imploring me to give him some advice and help, or at all events a kind word. Gideon Hatterick, I already knew, had married again, a hard grasping woman not well spoken of in the parish. She hated poor Hamilton, and had stirred up her husband to consider him a burden, and to treat him as a drudge. He was sent out to labour in the fields, and, worse than that, he was every hour taunted with his dependent position, with what they believed to be the disgrace of his birth."

"Oh! how hard! how unjust!" said Lelgarde, tearfully.

"He implored me to suggest some line in which he might hope to secure independence, and earn his own bread. I turned to the date of his letter—it was several weeks old—and there was another of more recent date, written hastily, almost angrily, in which he said that as even I would take no notice of him in his distress, he could bear his life no longer, and had resolved to give up a name to which he was constantly told that he had probably no right, and plunge into the world, to sink or swim. My dear young lady, may you never feel as I have felt, that you have let a soul drift away to its ruin, when a kind word might have saved it."

"But surely—surely you have heard of him since then?" Lelgarde said, almost imploringly.

She had turned very pale, and looked disappointed and weary.

"I lost no time," said Mr. Benson. "I spared no pains. I could not be angry at the insolent answers I got from Mrs. Hatterick. I deserved it all, and more, Heaven knows. But I could find out nothing. The boy had gone off, I suppose had changed his name, for I could not trace him. One or two gentlemen had lodged at Hatterick's the summer before for fishing and sketching, and had taken a good deal of notice, I believe, of the lad; but the Hattericks either could not or would not remember their names; and when I got them at the post-office I had no clue to their addresses."

"But you know their names?" said my sister, breathlessly.

"I did know them," he said, "but there were several of them, and it is ten years ago."

Lelgarde looked thoroughly dispirited. The quest seemed abruptly ended, the clue lost utterly. She put her bundle of papers into Mr. Benson's hands with a few words of explanation.

"Read these," she concluded, "and pity me, for I am the mistress of Athelstanes."

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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XXXII. THE TRUE LOVE.

Now that they had so exacting an inmate as Miss Archbold at Monasterlea, it required all May's industry to keep things as they ever had been, to stop little gaps in the household arrangements made by the irregular demands of the visitor upon everybody's time. Katherine was pleased to leave her gowns about her room upon the floor in heaps, her petticoats flung on the bed, her slippers in different corners, and the delicate silk hose tossed among her cambric pocket-handkerchiefs. Her cosmetics and hair-brushes, her pin-boxes and cream-pots, her essence-bottles and jewel-cases, and powder-puffs, together with the novel she had been reading, were found every morning in wild confusion upon her toilet-table.

Bridget was expected to reduce the place to order, and this was a work of time; for what with her awe which made her hesitate, her curiosity which led her to pry, and her admiration which forced her to pause over every new object that she touched, the morning was pretty well filled with the discharge of her new duty. Nannie grumbled, and Miss Martha sighed; the time had gone past when the old lady could sing Miss Archbold's praises. But the burden fell on May.

To-day she got her work done early, for she had it in her mind that she would meet Paul coming home from Tobereevil. The day had brightened since Katherine's going forth, and there was a promise of spring in the air, if not its actual presence. A breath from April would wake all nature into life. The hedgerows were thick with buds, and alive with birds, who already scented the coming summer in the air. A lark soared in an ecstasy into clouds through which the sun was breaking his way. Tinges of soft green had crept out among the long purple and brown undulations of the moorland, and touches of pale yellow, that would soon be green, gilded the edges of reddish furrows in the recently ploughed fields. As May went along she could not see Paul, and when she came to the woods she shrank from plunging into them. They only, of all the landscape, kept a frown upon their faces; but it took a great deal of sun to make them bright. Near their outskirts lay pretty little sylvan groves, which seemed perpetually announcing with their smiles to the world that they had crept out from under the shadow of the curse, and that they had only a distant kinship with the trees of the dreadful woods. In one of these, which commanded a view of Simon's avenue, May took her seat upon a fallen tree. A stream flowed past her feet which but yesterday had been frozen, and which was rejoicing noisily in its freedom. Clumps of primroses had nestled themselves under the shelter of mossy stones at its edge, so that they could taste its delicate spray, and enjoy its genial company. Violets had decked out the splay roots of an old thorn which had dragged itself from the earth by sheer weight of its mighty age. This stream, with its flower-borders and mosses, its old thorn and fallen oak, was in a warm nook where Spring could not but choose to show herself early. It skirted a vast bog, whose rugged brown outlines swept behind in sombre bleakness, and made a bit of beauty all the more gladsome because of ugliness close at hand.

The girl sat down on a fallen tree to watch for the first appearance of a human figure in the distance. The past three months had left their traces upon May. Her face was always pale now, except when a blush or a spring wind made it bloom for a passing moment. Her eyes had grown larger and darker, and had a look of hidden suffering. Pauses like this were very difficult to her, for she could not afford much brooding when in trouble, was not given to tears, and did not do what women call fretting. Grief dealt so hardly with her that for life's dear sake she was driven into resistance.

This was not the romantic sorrow of the girl of a year ago, whose lover had gone away, but the quiet woe of a woman who had sworn to be faithful. Grief that is most unselfish is always hardest to bear. A selfish heart will comfort itself with the little merciful compensations which life is ever providing, but the heart that aches for another cannot even relish peace while evil has hold of the one beloved. May plucked violets for occupation, and made them up into nosegays, and wound them together in wreaths; one she would give to Paul for his button-hole, and she would wear another in her bosom. But she would not give any to Katherine. She and Paul should share at least a wreath of violets between them.

At this childish work her heart eased itself a little, till, looking up, she saw figures in the distance among the trees—Paul and Katherine; but they were not coming quite her way. The flowers fell from her fingers; her hands dropped in her lap. She had told Paul in the morning that she would, if possible, meet him at this spot, but he had met Katherine instead, and she was leaning on his arm. It seemed to May that they were walking as lovers walk. She sighed a little, and then the blow descended on her heart, her senses went away, and she fell from her seat, and lay, forgetful of all trouble, among the primroses.

At the other side of the bank, and right behind the great thorn, an old woman was toiling down in a cutting of the ugly bog. She was the person known in the country as "Bid the thraveller," and she had been busy since daybreak cutting long sods of the black reeking turf, and setting them up on their ends together in little stacks. By-and-bye she would come back to them, and spread them out to get thoroughly dried, and against autumn she would have accumulated a store of firing to present to some kindly householder, at whose fireside she was used to sit. Her work done for the present, she washed her hands and feet in the brown bog-water, and put on her old cloak, which had been laid aside carefully, and picked up her stick, and began to climb the bank, that she might rest in the grove a little before beginning her evening journey to seek a shelter for the night. Old women can love pretty places as well as young girls, and May's fallen tree was a favourite resting-place for Bid, who might often be found there on fine days, knitting busily in the solitude.

Bid felt a little uneasy as she climbed the bank, for as she tied on her cloak she had heard a sigh float past her ear across the loneliness and silence of the bog. It seemed as if the wind had bent the bog-blossoms, and they had whispered, "My heart is broken." No sound heard here need be surprising, where the air was full of spirits, but Bid did not quite like to be the confidante of creatures of whom she knew not the dwelling-place, nor the nature. The very bending and bowing of the ranks and files of white fleecy blossoms that rocked themselves towards her like living things in trouble made the old creature shiver, and almost believe that they had spoken. She crept up the bank, and crossed herself as she set foot in the little grove; but superstition fled like a bat at blink of daylight when she saw a fellow-creature lying prone on the earth.

Bid knew the girl from the abbey. Not once, nor twice, but many scores of times had she been warmed and fed by her in the kitchen at Monasterlea, and the old woman was afflicted at this piteous sight. She knew now whose heart was broken. Bid was shrewd and sympathetic; there was not a love-story in the country that she did not know of, and she had early scented trouble when things got amiss with Paul and his promised wife. She had called Katherine a witch before that young lady had been a week at Monasterlea; and a few minutes since she had descried this witch and May's lover coming out of the woods.

"Heart's blood of the hope of the counthry!" murmured the old woman, making a kind of mournful song as she chafed the girl's cold fingers. "Ye brought throuble on yer head when ye promised this bit o' a hand to a Finiston. Sure the devil that is tackled wid Paul has took a woman's shape this time! But ye'll rise out o' her, avourneen—ye'll rise out o' her yet!"

The words filtered through May's ears as she lay on the arm of the good Samaritan. She sat up and wondered how her secret had been found out.

"Deary, don't mind an ould woman!" said Bid. "Sure I love Paul Finiston mysel', an' I have swore, on my knees, that the divil'll never get him. I niver put up a prayer that wasn't answered in the end; an' harm shall not get Paul while his friends has tongues to pray!"

May sat on a stone opposite Bid, who exhorted her thus, with finger uplifted and a sybil-like look on her weather-beaten face.

"The curse is against me," said May, despondingly. "It is creeping closer round him, and I am too weak to save him from it."

Bid looked frightened. "You won't give him up, avourneen?" she asked.

"Give him up!" said May, and she rose to her feet, glowing with sudden energy. "No, I will not."

"God love you, my jewel!" said Bid, "for you're fit to have the hope of the country in yer hands. Of course ye'll manage him well, for the quality does know how to deal wid one another; but I'm thinkin' it's mostly the same wid high an' low, an I wanst lost a lover wid floutin' an' poutin' at him. He got tired o' a cross face, an' went off to seek a pleasanter wan; so you just despise yon flauntin' hussy, an' smile at Paul Finiston till ye smile the divil out o' him!"

"You are a kind friend," said May; and she began to think of how strange it was that she should thus give her confidence to a beggar-woman. But she put down her pride with a true instinct. "Ask the people to pray," she said, "for you are right in saying that this is the affair of the country."

"Ay!" said Bid, "it is the affair of the whole counthry; for if Paul Finiston gets into evil hands there'll be another miser o' Tobereevil, an' a star the less in heaven. An' do you keep up yer heart an' smile; for they say the divil does fly away before the smile o' patience."

May went home with the beggar's lesson in her heart, and, coming through the kitchen-garden, she met Katherine tripping along, carrying a large carrot by its green top, which was soiled with clay, having just left the ground. The guest was singing loudly, as if in the highest spirits. She seldom sang except when unable to control the outpouring of her triumph over some one; and she liked to please, except when she could have her will without the trouble of doing so. Her voice was shrill, and as she sang, coming down the kitchen-garden, there was a cruel harshness in her song which might have made the birds shiver. It was dusk, but the girls could see one another as they met between the ranks of the cabbages, and May wondered greatly at Katherine's fancy for vegetables. The latter stopped her song upon a high, sudden note, while she picked the clay in pieces from her carrot.

"Perhaps you are looking for Paul," she said, with a careless air of superior knowledge. "He is gone home to his farm-house. He will not be here to-night."

"I dare say he is busy," said May.

Katherine shrugged her shoulders and smiled. "I don't think he has much business in his head," she said. "I believe he is not in the humour for our company. He is not happy in his mind. Why don't you make him happy?"

"He has a good deal of care," said May, not noticing the insolence of Katherine's tone. "He will be happier by-and-bye."

"Perhaps he will," said Katherine, and turned her back on May, and went on towards the house.

In Paul's absence conversation was apt to flag of an evening between the ladies at Monasterlea. Since experience had revealed Katherine's character to Miss Martha, the young lady took no longer any trouble to amuse her hostess; who treated her, nevertheless, with all politeness and attention, for hospitality is a tyrant, and the unwelcome guest must be treated like the guest who is most desired.

Katherine knew this, and made herself comfortable accordingly. On this evening, while May sewed and Miss Martha knitted, she yawned over the pages of a novel. Her entertainers were not sorry when she bade them good-night and yawned herself away to her own chamber.

When she had gone, May turned with her sewing to the fire, for she could not bear Miss Martha's eyes. She had known for a long time that her aunt wanted to speak to her, and she felt that she could not endure the things that the old lady would surely say. But now she plied her needle wildly, knowing that the moment had come when she must listen to a lecture with patience; that a conversation was going to take place which it would be very hard for her to forget.

Miss Martha was evidently making a

great struggle to begin. Her knitting-needles flew faster, and pecked at each other wickedly, never heeding dropped stitches. Her mouth twitched, and her chin went up in the air and came down again.

"May," she said, "is it possible that you have got nothing to say to me; now when we are alone, and not likely to be interrupted?"

"I, Aunty?"

"Yes, you. Who else? Is it possible that you have nothing to complain of?"

"Complain! Why should I complain?"

"We shall not get on very far if you echo every word I speak," said Miss Martha, testily. "You may as well be frank with me—not look on me as an enemy. I am old and fidgety, but I am not at all sure that you have another friend in the world."

May's lips moved, but no sound came. She tried again and said, "Only one besides, Aunty."

Miss Martha's irritation was soothed away. She drew her chair a little nearer, stretched out her soft wrinkled hand, and laid it on May's shoulder. "Are you sure that you have that one, May? Come, trust the poor old woman! Inward grieving will rot the soundest heart."

May's lips quivered, but her mouth soon steadied itself, and her eyes kept dry and bright.

"Now turn round to me, for I want to see your face. If you have got nothing to tell me, then I must speak out to you; I wish in the name of Heaven that you had never set your eyes on Paul Finiston."

"You must not say that."

"Yes, I will say it; for I fear he will break your heart. I will say, also, that I thought you had more spirit. If I were in your place I would bid good-bye to him at once, and let him go about his business."

"I can't do it, Aunty; and if I could, I dare not."

"Dare not!"

"Oh, do you forget? Paul is not like another man. It is the shadow that he has always dreaded that has come over him, that is all."

"Fiddle-de-dee!" said Miss Martha; "that old nonsense! I tell you I won't listen to it; it is a sin against Heaven. I thought you had more sense than to get smitten with his madness."

"It may be madness," said May; "but madness is a misfortune, not a crime. Something has gone wrong with him; I will not make it worse by leaving him when he most wants a friend."

Miss Martha winced. Simon's words, "You who deserted me in my need," came across her ears, as they had many a time done since the day they were spoken. But May's doctrine was not acceptable to Miss Martha's faith. It must lie in people's own will, whether to be bad or good.

"Fiddle-de-dee," said Miss Martha again. "People walk into crooked ways with their eyes open, and then they rail at fate for not putting their feet into straight ones."

"I don't think Paul is deliberately walking in crooked ways," said May; "and unless he himself throws me off I will hold to him even at the cost of being thought to have no spirit. I know him better than you do, and I believe there are stranger things in the world than you think of."

"You think he is bewitched, so that he doesn't know what he is doing," said Miss Martha in amazement.

"I cannot say what I think. He is under some influence which seems to have changed his whole nature. If he be quite delivered up to it the change will be completed, and he will become——" May shuddered and paused.

"You have grown as superstitious as himself," said Aunt Martha. "I really give you up. All I can say is, I wonder you can sit by neglected, and see him prefer another woman."

May turned pale, and her hands knotted themselves together in a knot of pain. "I cannot say that I have seen that yet, Aunty."

There was something of agony in the young girl's voice, that smote upon Miss Martha's heart, and made her regret her impatient speeches.

"Perhaps you are right, love," she said, after a pause. "I am a peppery old woman; but your happiness is the one object of my life."

"I know it, dear Aunty; but listen, and I will tell you about my happiness. It is staked on one person; his welfare is my welfare, his affliction is my affliction; I have no business in the world except to be true to Paul Finiston. His cares, and even his wrong-going, must all be upon my shoulders. I believe it would be a great misfortune to him if he were to love Katherine Archbold, therefore I will do all in my power to prevent such a thing happening. If I saw her truer, more loving, more likely to make him good and happy than myself, I think—I think I could give him

up to her; but I do not believe he likes her, and there are other things which I dread for him more than her influence. He is not in a condition at present to meet his enemies; I must fight his battles for him until good times come. So don't be disgusted if I have got no proper pride, but try to have patience with me, and with him for my sake."

So spoke May, with a brave air; but later, when quite alone, she walked about the room, weeping silently. The cottage was quiet, but the wind moaned loudly round the cloisters, and the owls had begun to hoot in the old belfry. Her thought travelled through the dark night, along the moorland path to the highest window in the gable of the farm-house. There was Paul sitting alone and overwhelmed with strange troubles, as far removed from her as if the sea had rolled between them. Here was an hour in which Katherine could not divide them, and yet that hour was as useless to her as if it had no place in time. She longed to be a cat or a dog, that she might sit beside his foot, and look in his face, or a bird that she might peck at his window and gain admittance. Was he reckoning the miser's hoards, or thinking of Katherine? It seemed long, long since he and she had made their simple plans at this fireside, counting the world a paradise, and all danger of harm and trouble at an end. Now the night wind assured her that these days would come no more.

Faster and faster her tears came down. She despaired when she found herself weeping, thinking her courage quite gone, and flung herself against the old arm-chair in the chimney-corner, burying her face in its leathern lap. The old clock ticked in the hall by the stone angel, and its voice came into the room and grew hoarse with sympathy; the lamp burned low, and the fire glowed in red ashes; and May was tempted for once to think of her aunt's vehement wish, and to doubt whether it would not have been better for her if she had never seen Paul. She might have had placid years in this home safe from the world; have made soups for the sick, and knitted her life into warm petticoats and socks for the poor; have heard the winter howl past her in fearless content, and picked the flowers of the summers, and so travelled without a pang to her grave. Now the turmoil of despair was in her heart, and a prospect lay before her of endless uneasiness and pain. The tranquil little home could not comfort her with its shelter; the household gods looked down and could not soothe. But it was only for one moment that this cruel doubt was harboured.

"It is well that I have known him," she said; "for I will save him if it cost me my life. When he is old, and the battle won, he will be glad to think that I lived."

She dried her tears, and thought upon Paul's case, acknowledging that the thing that she dreaded most for him was the utter loss of his mind; that the curse and its fascinations, or his horror of the same, would in the end drive him to madness. What if after all it had been only a latent insanity that had wrought through generations of the race of Finiston, making them creatures unhappy and solitary, and shunned by the rest of mankind? If so, then had Paul better fly from this place with its associations, and seek safety in another part of the world. She would send him across the seas, and never look upon his face again, if thus she could secure his perfect welfare.

Katherine at the same moment was also awake and alive, though she had retired to her room so early. The tall wax candles on her chimney stood in candlesticks adorned with crossed and reverend figures which had been taken from the chapel, having been used on the monks' altar. Her wood-fire crackled merrily, her arm-chair was drawn up beside it, and she was dressed in a long red flannel dressing-gown, with her hair unbound on her shoulders.

As Katherine sat so she amused herself with a quaint amusement. She held the carrot in her hand which had excited May's wonder in the kitchen-garden; and she had washed it and cut away its delicate green plumes, and was carving it with a penknife into the likeness of a little man. She was making a mandrake in order to keep her word to Tibbie, and she held it aloof, and laughed at it as her work progressed. She had never seen a mandrake, but then neither had Tibbie, and in pleasing the old woman she would follow her own fancy. She was by no means an artist, but contrived to throw a knowing look into the eyes of the little figure, making it as ugly as it was possible that one could make it. She pared, and picked, and notched till its aspect had become sinister enough to content the most superstitious hag in the world. When all was done she stained it a darker hue, so that the carrot might not appear.

But what did Miss Archbold want with Tibbie that she should thus humour her

whims? Katherine did not ask herself the question while she carved her ugly mannikin. A spirit such as Tibbie's deserved encouragement, that was all; and one who lived so near the miser could not but be interesting to the future bride of his nephew. Katherine wondered, as she worked, how long the old man could live. How if his seventy years should multiply until they counted a hundred? Katherine sat up long that night, with brows bent, over the fire. She was beginning to feel care, she who had never met any obstacle to her wishes which had not been easily overcome. The owls hooted in the belfry, and the winds moaned round the cloisters; and even May was fast asleep before Katherine left her chair.

CHRONICLES OF LONDON STREETS.

NEWGATE (CONCLUDED).

JOSEPH WALL, commandant of the African Corps, was lieutenant-governor of the island of Goree, in Africa, and superintendent of trade to the colony of Senegambia, in the year 1782. He was an Irishman of good family, but of a severe and unrelenting disposition, and liked neither by his officers nor men. At the revolution of the Havannah in 1762, he had fought with especial courage, and won his well-deserved promotion. As a subordinate the man would have been brave and loyal, as a superior he was merciless and tyrannical, for power intoxicates and brutalises some minds. His wife was an accomplished woman of noble birth. In July, 1782, the governor being affected by the disease proverbially so fatal to Europeans, prepared to return to England. The day before he sailed, at eleven A.M., twenty or thirty men out of the three hundred soldiers of the African Corps came up in a body to the Government House, and respectfully requested that before the paymaster left with the governor, they might receive money that had been stopped from their pay, for certain restrictions in food that the garrison had just before been voluntarily enduring for some months, when provisions ran short. As spokesman at the head of these petitioners was a soldier named Benjamin Armstrong, who advanced hat in hand, and paid the governor every respect. The governor, enraged at the complaint of the men, instantly ordered Armstrong and his party back to the barracks under threat of punishment.

The men obeyed and returned without noise about two P.M. A second party, led by a soldier named Upton, without uniform or arms, also made the same perfectly just application to Ensign Dearing, the paymaster. Soon after the governor's dinner-hour, Wall ran out, beat one of the men who appeared to be drunk, and snatching a bayonet from the sentry, struck him with it, and then put both men under arrest. Thirsting for revenge on what he called "the mutinous rascals," who had dared to ask for their rights, the governor ordered the long roll to be beat, and parade called. The three hundred men, without firearms, were formed into a circle, two deep, in the midst of which stood the implacable governor, the drummers, his obsequious captain, and pliant ensigns. Immediately the cumbrous carriage of a six-pounder was dragged into the circle, and the governor called Benjamin Armstrong out of the ranks. Five or six brawny black slaves then appeared, with an interpreter to give them orders, and unfortunate Armstrong was lashed by the wrists to the rings of the gun-carriage, to receive on the spot eight hundred lashes. The rope used was not the usual whipcord tied to a wooden handle, such as the cord with which they sting garotters in Newgate at the present day, nor even the tight-twisted log-line used on board men-of-war, but a long lashing of rope nearly an inch in circumference. With brutal cruelty, Governor Wall ordered a fresh black to take the rope every twenty-five lashes, and if the stalwart slaves at all relaxed, he shouted: "Lay on, you black beasts, or I'll lay on you; cut him to the heart, cut his liver out."

When this cruel punishment was ended, poor Armstrong, with his back "as black as a new hat," walked to the hospital, saying he felt he should certainly die. Rowe, the assistant-surgeon, found the rope had bruised and not cut the flesh, and the injuries were therefore the more serious. The poor fellow sank and died five days after the governor left for England. In March, 1784, Wall, who had been arrested at Bath by order of Lord Sidney, escaped from his majesty's messengers at the Brown Bear, Reading. He then escaped to France, changed his name, and there and in Italy lived respectably and kept good company, much affecting the Irish officers in the French service, and the professors of the Scotch and Irish colleges in Paris. In 1797, Wall returned to England and lodged in Lambeth Cut, and afterwards in Upper Thornhaugh-street, Bedford-square, Tottenham Court-road, where his wife visited him. In October, 1801, Wall

wrote to Lord Pelham, then secretary of state, announcing his readiness to submit to a trial. He was tried January 22nd, 1802. The prisoner's defence was, that before Armstrong was punished an open mutiny had broken out among the Goree garrison. Armstrong had refused to march the men back till their claims were allowed, and had said he should not leave for England. A prisoner had been released, the soldiers had threatened to break open the stores, and a sentry had held a bayonet to his (Wall's) breast. He denied that he had ever blown men from cannon as had been reported. The prisoner was found guilty, and sentence of death passed. He seemed deeply affected by the sentence, but only requested the court to give him a little time to prepare for death. After two respites, the miserable man was hung on the 28th of January. The night before the execution, the prisoner's wife, the Honourable Mrs. Wall, begged leave of Kirby, the jailer, to stay with her husband from nine to eleven, expecting a reprieve. They parted in tears, the miserable culprit saying he could submit to his fate with Christian fortitude. About one A.M., Wall, who did not sleep, inquired particularly at what time the scaffold would be brought out of the press-yard, and if it would make a great noise. The attendant, unwilling to hinder him from sleep, pretended ignorance. The poor wretch fell asleep between four and five o'clock, and did not hear the noise of the scaffold being dragged out to the debtors' door, though it shook the whole prison. But about twenty minutes after he awoke with a start, as a mail-coach passed and the horn blew cheerily, and said to the turnkey guarding him, "Is not that the fatal scaffold?" He did not fall asleep again after this, but asked many minute questions about the execution, particularly as to whether, being a tall man, he could not avoid the jerk when the scaffold fell, although, as he said, he presumed the jerk was intended to dislocate the sufferer's neck, and so put him the sooner out of pain. His voice preserved its usual strength and tone, and he spoke of his approaching death with the calmness and courage of an old soldier. At half-past six he asked an attendant whether the noise he heard was not the erecting of the scaffold. He was humanely answered in the negative. Wall put on that eventful morning a mixed-coloured loose coat with a black collar, a swan's-down waistcoat, blue pantaloons, and white silk stockings. Doctor Ford, the ordinary, soon afterwards entered the cell, and the prisoner joined him devoutly in prayer.

In that curious and amusing work, A Book for a Rainy Day, Mr. J. T. Smith, formerly Keeper of the Print Room in the British Museum, says: "Solomon, a pencil-dealer, assured me that he could procure me a sight of the governor, if I would only accompany him in the evening to Hatton-garden, and smoke a pipe with Doctor Ford, the ordinary of Newgate, with whom he said he was particularly intimate. Away we trudged; and upon entering the club-room of a public-house, we found the said doctor most pompously seated in a superb masonic chair, under a stately crimson canopy, placed between the windows. The room was clouded with smoke whiffed to the ceiling, which gave me a better idea of what I had heard of the Black Hole of Calcutta than any place I had seen. There were present at least a hundred associates of every denomination; of this number my Jew, being a favoured man, was admitted to a whispering audience with the doctor, which soon produced my introduction to him."

Sunrise, the next morning, found Mr. Smith waiting by appointment for his new friend, Doctor Ford, at Newgate; and this is how he describes the end of Governor Wall:

"As we crossed the press-yard a cock crew; and the solitary clanking of a restless chain was dreadfully horrible. The prisoners had not risen. Upon our entering a cold stone room, a most sickly stench of green twigs, with which an old round-shouldered, goggle-eyed man was endeavouring to kindle a fire, annoyed me almost so much as the canaster fumigation of the doctor's Hatton-garden friends.

"The prisoner entered. He was death's counterfeit, tall, shrivelled, and pale; and his soul shot so piercingly through the port-holes of his head, that the first glance of him nearly terrified me. I said in my heart, putting my pencil in my pocket, God forbid that I should disturb thy last moments! His hands were clasped, and he was truly penitent. After the yeoman had requested him to stand up, he 'pinioned him,' as the Newgate phrase is, and tied the cord with so little feeling, that the governor, who had not given the wretch the accustomed fee, observed, 'You have tied me very tight,' upon which Doctor Ford ordered him to slacken the cord, which he did, but not without muttering. 'Thank you, sir,' said the governor to the doctor, 'it is of little moment.' He then observed to the attendant, who had brought in an

immense iron shovel full of coals to throw on the fire, 'Ay, in one hour that will be a blazing fire;' then, turning to the doctor, questioned him, 'Do tell me, sir, I am informed I shall go down with great force, is that so?' After the construction and action of the machine had been explained, the doctor questioned the governor as to what kind of men he had at Goree; 'Sir,' he answered, 'they sent me the very riff-raff.' The poor soul then joined the doctor in prayer; and never did I witness more contrition at any condemned sermon than he then evinced."

Directly the execution was over, Mr. Smith left Newgate, where the hangman's yeoman was selling the rope that had hung Governor Wall for a shilling an inch, while in Newgate-street a starved old man was selling another identical rope at the ridiculously low price of only sixpence an inch, and at the north-east corner of Warwick-lane, a woman known as Rosy Emma, reputed wife of the hangman's man, was selling a third identical noose to the Epping buttermen, who had come that morning to Newgate Market.

Mr. Steele, a lavender merchant, who lived at No. 15, Catherine-street, Strand, left town for Feltham, near Hounslow, where he had a small house and a nursery-garden, on the afternoon of Friday the 5th of November, 1802. Having seen to his gardens and stock and paid his workmen, he left his nursery the next day, Saturday, about seven in the evening. He wore at the time a light green coat, striped waistcoat, half-boots, and a round hat. Mr. Steele, not returning to London the next day, Mr. Meyer, his brother-in-law, became alarmed, and set out for Feltham, but Mr. Steele was not there. Mr. Meyer's alarm increasing, he went to the barracks at Hounslow to procure assistance, and a vigorous search was then instituted. The soldiers scouring the heath soon came on traces of the man who, it was began to be feared, had been murdered by foot-pads. His drab great-coat was found inside some flags in a gravel-pit about ten or fifteen yards from the road going from Hounslow to Staines. Soon after the soldiers discovered the body of the murdered lavender merchant on the opposite side of the road, about two hundred yards from the path. It lay in a ditch by a clump of trees, and a portion of the bank had been pulled down, or had fallen upon it. A buckled strap was drawn tight round the neck of the corpse, which was stained with blood and dirt. There was the mark of a crushing bludgeon blow on the back of the head, and a large bruise on the right arm. The hat and shoes were gone, and the flap of the coat was spread over the face. Mr. Steele's shoes were found about fifty yards from the body. The cruel murder excited great horror at the time, and the coachmen at night, by glimpses of the moon, would point out to pale and hushed passengers the exact spot were the body was found, and the third clump of trees, near the old gravel-pit, where the searchers had picked up an old hat supposed to have belonged to one of the murderers. The story was discussed, no doubt, often enough in Catherine-street, where timid eyes would turn towards the shop with the lavender-water in the window, as if the ghost of Mr. Steele might at any moment emerge from it and start again on the road to Hounslow.

The murder had been almost forgotten, when one day in the autumn of 1807, Benjamin Hanfield, a convict in a ship then lying at Portsmouth, confessed that he had helped in the crime, and could disclose the names of the two men who really killed Mr. Steele. Holloway and Haggerty, the two men pointed out by Hanfield, were at once arrested. Haggerty was a marine on board the Shannon frigate, then lying at Deal. When taken before the port admiral and asked where he had been four years ago, his countenance fell, and he would have fallen backwards had not Vickery, the police officer, caught him, sat him down, and given him some water. Holloway was found in Clerkenwell Prison, suffering for some offence for which he had been convicted. When taken by Vickery to John-street, Bedford-row, and the warrant read, he said, "I am innocent! Oh, dear! I know nothing about it. I will down on my knees to you and the justice if you will let me go."

Hanfield's version of the story was this. He had known Haggerty and Holloway, and been much with them for six or seven years. They generally met at the Turk's Head in Dyot-street, the Black Horse in Dyot-street, or the Black Dog at the corner of Belton-street. In the beginning of November, 1802, Holloway came to Hanfield at the Turk's Head, and asked him if he had any objection to being in a good thing. It was to be a "low toby" (foot-pad robbery). Hanfield consented, and it was arranged for the Saturday following. On that day, Hanfield, Haggerty, and

Holloway met. Holloway had found out a gentleman to "sarve" (rob) on Hounslow Heath. They sat drinking some time, and then started for Hounslow, and at Turnham Green they stayed again to refresh themselves, and at the Bell at Hounslow again drank. At half-past four they left the Bell, and proceeded over the heath till they reached the eleventh mile-stone towards Belfont. They were rather too soon, so they struck out over the heath to a clump of trees. It was dark when they got there, but by the time they had waited an hour the moon rose, and they again sallied out.

As they came out from the trees, Holloway said he thought he heard a footstep, and they went along the road till they thought they could descry the figure of a man coming along the road towards Hounslow. This man was Mr. Steele. On their stopping him and demanding his money, the lavender merchant at once consented to give it up without showing fight, and begged them not to hurt him. On his declaring he carried no pocket-book, Holloway knocked him down, and declared if he spoke he would knock out his brains. Hanfield took hold of Mr. Steele's legs. Haggerty then searched him, and on his struggling to get across the road, as a night coach approached, Holloway said, "I'll silence the beggar," and killed him with two dreadful blows of his blackthorn bludgeon. Hanfield then left them in terror, but was rejoined by them in a public-house at Hounslow. Holloway was then wearing the murdered man's hat. But on the Monday following, to avoid detection, he filled the hat with stones, and flung it into the Thames from Westminster Bridge. This was Hanfield's story, but the transported convict, who had turned king's evidence, was by no means to be implicitly believed.

From the beginning that shrewd and energetic man, Mr. James Harmer (afterwards Alderman Harmer), the attorney for Holloway and Haggerty, had a strong conviction that the two men were innocent. Hanfield it was proved had been a hackney-coachman and a thief, and had deserted from no fewer than five different regiments. Moreover, he had been once quartered at Hounslow. He had before escaped transportation by turning informer. Mr. Harmer also brought forward the sworn deposition of a fellow-prisoner of Hanfield's at the House of Correction, who proved that Hanfield had said, the day before the execution of the two men, that they could not be innocent, for if they had not done this they had done other things as bad, that the hulks were dreadful, and that rather than be seven years in the hulks he would hang as many men as were killed at the battle of Copenhagen. Hanfield was peculiarly brutal and ferocious in prison. There were endless discrepancies in his evidence, and after all the two men were chiefly convicted by means of a conversation overheard by an officer, when they were in adjoining cells in Worship-street, when they confessed a previous knowledge of each other. This cruel stratagem seems more worthy of Venice in the Middle Ages than of England in 1807, and after all it only proved that they had met before. To our mind the innocence of the two men is unquestionable, and the wretch Hanfield was probably the only murderer.

To the last the two men pathetically asserted their innocence. Upon the entrance of the sheriffs, Haggerty came out into the press-yard, and had his fetters struck off. He appeared deeply depressed, but uttered not a word, and returned into what is called the Long Room to be pinioned. Holloway was pinioned before his irons were removed. He again returned into the Long Room, and a few minutes after said he wished to speak to the gentlemen. At this time several noblemen, the lord mayor, Alderman Flower, and many gentlemen, besides the sheriffs and under-sheriffs, were assembled in the yard.

A circle was formed, and, on his entering it, he began on his right, bowing slowly and reverently, until he had completed the circle; he then stood erect in the centre, and in an audible voice said, "Gentlemen, I die innocent; I know nothing of this here affair that I am going to suffer for." He then dropped down upon his knees, and with his hands, as in the posture of prayer, said, "I am innocent, by God!" He then arose, and with great composure proceeded to the scaffold.

The final catastrophe was terrible indeed. The crowd which assembled to witness the execution was nearly forty thousand. The pressure of the crowd was such, that before the prisoners appeared, some women who could be no longer supported by the men, were suffered to fall, and were trampled to death. This was also the case with several men and boys. In all parts there were continued cries of "Murder! murder!" particularly from the female part of the spectators and children, some of whom were seen expiring without the

possibility of obtaining the least assistance, every one being employed in endeavouring to preserve his own life. The most affecting scene of distress was seen at the end of Green Arbour-court, nearly opposite the debtors' door. The terrible occurrence which took place near this spot was attributed to the circumstance of two piemen attending there, and one of them having his basket overthrown, which stood upon a sort of stool with four legs; some of the mob, not being aware of what had happened, and at the same time severely pressed, fell over the basket and the man at the very moment he was picking it up, together with its contents. Those who once fell were never more suffered to rise, such was the violence of the mob. At this fatal place a man of the name of Herrington was thrown down, who had in his hand his youngest son, a fine boy about twelve years of age. The youth was soon trampled to death; the father recovered, though much bruised, and was amongst the wounded in St. Bartholomew's Hospital. A woman who was so imprudent as to take with her a child at the breast, was one of the number killed; whilst in the act of falling, she forced the child into the arms of the man nearest to her, requesting him, for God's sake, to save its life; the man finding it required all his exertion to preserve himself, threw the infant from him, but it was fortunately caught at a distance by another man, who, finding it difficult to insure its safety or his own, got rid of it in a similar way. The child was again caught by a person who contrived to struggle with it to a cart, under which he deposited it until the danger was over, and the mob had dispersed. In other parts the pressure was so great, that a horrible scene of confusion ensued, and seven persons lost their lives by suffocation alone. It was shocking to behold a large body of the crowd, in a convulsive struggle for life, fighting with the most savage fury with each other; the consequence was that the weakest, particularly the women, fell a sacrifice. A cart, which was overloaded with spectators, broke down, and some of the persons, falling from the vehicle, were trampled under foot, and never recovered. During the hour the malefactors hung, little assistance could be afforded to the unhappy sufferers; but after the bodies were cut down, and the gallows removed to the Old Bailey yard, the marshals and constables cleared the street where the catastrophe occurred, and shocking to relate, there lay near one hundred persons dead, or in a state of insensibility, strewed round the street.

In an interesting account of a visit to various prisons in 1818, written by that excellent philanthropist, Joseph John Gurney, in 1819, that writer appends some sensible and practical remarks made on prison discipline by himself and his noble sister, Mrs. Fry, the very type of Christian charity. He speaks warmly of the good effected by the Ladies' Prison Visiting Association, which commenced its labours among the female prisoners of Newgate in April, 1817. Those excellent people, the Quakers, always alive to works of charity, originated the movement, and were first, here and in America, to revive a remembrance of the almost forgotten fact that the object of law and justice is not so much to punish as to reform the criminal. Mere cruelty transforms him into a wild beast, kindness and religion restore him to humanity, bring him back from the pariah state, and often restore him to civilisation. The feeling that good men still care for him, and do not look upon him as utterly lost, softens his heart, and habits of order, sobriety, and industry, recreate him, as it were, and often recal him to humanity. The cold-blooded murderer alone the law considers as hopeless, irreclaimable, and dangerous, and so dismisses him from life in terrible but just retaliation for the life he has taken: all other criminals it should endeavour to warn, and if possible to reclaim. Poverty has perhaps led him to crime, and his habits of crime may have arisen merely from never having heard of or seen virtue. Most young prisoners are reclaimable; most women whom vice (the result of their seducer's crime) has turned into thieves or drunkards, are reclaimable if a better mode of life is opened to them. On these great principles Mrs. Fry acted, and with a success that seems the result of Heaven's special blessing. At that time the female prisoners in Newgate were sunk into an apparently hopeless state of idleness, abandoned and shameless vice, riot, and drunkenness. They were the dregs of the dregs of London, the scum of the scum, blasphemous, filthy, ignorant of the commonest decencies and duties of life. Frequent communication was allowed them, through an iron grating, with visitors of both sexes, many of such visitors as vile, degraded, and desperate as themselves.

There was not even an attempt at general inspection; the only rough separation of classes and degrees of guilt was that of the tried from the untried. They slept promiscuously in large companies. The hardening and debasing executions were terribly frequent, and fresh prisoners were perpetually pouring in.

The good effected by the lady visitors was almost instantaneous. The most depraved and abandoned prisoners, with that hard-earned knowledge of the world they had earned by blood and tears, felt at once how pure and unselfish these ladies were. The most debased and cynical could discover only one motive for the conduct of those who brought the cup of cold water in His name. The stormiest heart was found still able to throb at a kind word, a pitying look, an act of kindness. The lowest of the criminals soon began to conform to the new standard; the scene changed; the worst women became quiet and gentle, orderly and industrious, neater and cleaner, their very countenances improved and softened. They would sit for hours with the ladies who visited Newgate, and behave with perfect decorum. Many learned to read; others became dexterous at knitting and needlework, all, by some means or another, were busily employed. Two of the committee, if possible, together, visited the prison daily, and became acquainted with the cases of individual prisoners. Women who had entered Newgate in rags or half naked, were decently clad, either by aid of their own earnings or at the expense of the association. The vilest grew more self-respecting. The prisoners' patchworks, spinning, and knitting were sold for them, and if possible part of their earnings set by to accumulate for their benefit when they returned to the world. Schools were started for the children and for the grown-up women. The governesses were chosen from the more intelligent, and steady, and persevering of the prisoners. A capital system of supervision was also established: Over every twelve or thirteen women a matron was placed, who was answerable for their work, and kept an account of their conduct. A ward woman attended to the cleanliness of the wards, a yard woman maintained good order in the yards, and the sick-room was ruled by a nurse and an assistant. These officers were selected from the most orderly and respectable of the prisoners, and they received extra emolument. These situations were great incitements to good conduct. The female prisoners assembled every morning in the committee room to hear the Bible, and sometimes a prayer, read by the matron or one of the visitors. The women on being dismissed, returned to their several employments, says Mr. Gurney, with uniform order and quietness.

Who can tell how far this extraordinary change in the female prisoners of Newgate was real? The outward result there was no disputing. The women became especially honest among themselves. In no less than one hundred thousand manufactured articles of work not one was stolen. Even a still more satisfactory proof of the good effected was the great decrease in the number of recommitments, only four prisoners having been reconvicted from 1817 to 1819; these criminals on their return evincing a strong sense of uneasiness and shame. Many of the poor women who left were kept under supervision by members of the committee, and were found to preserve a good character, obtaining places as servants, or earning an honest livelihood at home. Several of the women on their discharge received small loans to help them forward, and these loans they repaid by most punctual weekly instalments. At the end of 1817 a return was made, at the request of the benevolent T. F. Buxton, of the recommitments on the "male side" of Newgate. It then appeared that, out of two hundred and three men, forty-seven of those convicted had been confined there before within the two preceding years. The returns on the female side since the Ladies' Association civilised that part of the prison, are not more, as compared with the male side, than as four are to forty-seven. Before the angels of mercy came in Quaker garb, the returns on the female side used to be, compared with those of the male side, as three are to five. And all these great results are the effect of a little kindness, and a little Christian charity.

DROWNED.

A MAIDEN on a summer eve
Stood watching at the place of tryst,
For him who came not; till at last
Uprose from earth, the night's chill mist;
And wistfully she fixed her eyes
Upon the pale stars in the skies.

The lindens shivered in the breeze,
The cold East breeze, though it was June,
As sometimes an Æolian harp,
Sounds one false concord out of tune;
And o'er her heart, there crept a chill,
A prescience of coming ill.

The white owl hooted his refrain,
Weird prophet, from the ivied tower;
The jackdaw, from the belfry loft,
Echoed the striking of the hour.
Ten strokes! And with a tear-stained face,
Homeward her way she 'gan to trace.

Drowned! he was drowned that afternoon,
Drowned in the loveliest of spots,
Upon the silver breast of Thames,
Amid the blue forget-me-nots.
For her, the maiden, all but wife,
Went out, that eve, the star of life!

OUR HALL.

We are proud of our Hall, looking upon it as one of the features of London, and a place of favourite resort for visitors from the provinces. It is not a vestry-hall, though from time to time there are delivered in it speeches as full of sound and fury, and as significant of nothing, as are bawled forth in any parochial parliament. It is not, strictly speaking, according to the common acceptation of the term, a music-hall, though in it the best works of the greatest masters are constantly performed by the most finished executants. It is not a floral-hall, though in it we have seen a splendid display of fruit and flowers, nor a dining-hall, though the lively turtle, who gambol in its lower windows, are sacrificed and eaten within, nor a discussion-hall, nor a temperance-hall, nor a medical-hall, which seems to be modern English for a chemist's shop. Its uses are various. When Miss Norah O'Flaherty gives her annual concert on St. Patrick's Day—on which occasion such numbers of her gallant countrymen rally round her to cheer the national airs strung together in the Och Hubbaboo Quadrille—she hires our Hall for the purpose. When the Reverend Thrashem Wigg pours out the vials of his wrath on the gaily-dressed lady who dwells in the city erected on seven hills, nothing smaller than our Hall can contain the ladies and gentlemen who flock in from Clapham, to glory in the denunciation of the lady in question, and of the old gentleman in the skull cap, who is her aider and abettor. Readers, entertainers, concert givers, people who go about with giants and dwarfs, and who used to be called showmen, but who are now euphuistically styled "entrepreneurs," promoters of fancy fairs, and horticultural shows, billiard champions, and everybody who has anything to exhibit or expound, and who require a handsome, large, and fashionably situated location—all come to our Hall, which was expressly built to suit their wants. For our Hall is the St. James's Hall, in Piccadilly, and winter and summer, spring and autumn, day and night, there is something going on there.

Let us take the winter season first. To the average London man, who takes his pleasures with a proper amount of tranquillity, there is perhaps no period of the year more thoroughly enjoyable than that between Christmas and Easter. Then the vigour gained during his autumnal holiday is still fresh within him; he has been for a long time separated from his acquaintances, and even the dullest of them will probably have stolen some tolerably new idea; he has been snipe-shooting in Ireland, or hunting in the shires, or travelling abroad in the wildest and most primitive parts available, and he returns to the charms of civilisation with increased appreciation and infinite gusto. Then comes the cosey dinner, either at the club or with a small, well-selected party (you can never get just the people you want during the season), with the firelight and the candle-light gleaming off plate and glass, throwing a pleasant glow on surrounding pictures and furniture, and shedding everywhere an air of comfort, infinitely superior to all the elegance of flower and fruit decoration to be met with later on. Then is the time to nestle in the comfortable stall or the snug private box. Then is the time when certain columns of the newspapers teem with advertisements, announcing the return to England of some of the most distinguished members of the musical profession, and when the professionals themselves can be heard at their freshest and their best, before they are hand-benumbed, brain-weary, or voice-worn by the exigencies of the London season.

Five minutes to eight o'clock on a damp, misty, muggy, January night. The Regent-street entrance to St. James's Hall blocked with vehicles, cabs for the most part, but with a good sprinkling of private carriages; very few rakish broughams, but the family landau, with the footman, whose great-coat never fits him; the roomy clarence, set off by the silver-hat-banded page-boy; and the common domestic fly, which seems to have long since given up pretending to be a private vehicle, are here in every variety. Stand aside while Mrs. Pocklington Snodby and the two Miss Snodbys, who have been for the last three quarters of an hour boxed up in their carriage on their way from Clapham Park, slither over the greasy pavement, and are received at the door by

young Mr. Gossett, of Wood-street, E.C., who has been dining at his club, the Junior Patagonian, and faultlessly attired, lavender gloved and flower button-holed, is waiting to escort the ladies up the stairs. Room now if you please for little Lady Quibbs, pleasantest, brightest, kindliest of women. If you know anything of the musical world, and are anything like a decent age, you will recollect Lady Quibbs when she was Miss Lavrock, long before she married Sir Parker Quibbs, K.C.B., when she and her sister used to sing at public dinners and the nobility's concerts, when they gave lessons in Bulstrode-street, Manchester-square, when Mrs. Von Bomm used regularly to lend them her big drawing-rooms in Harley-street for their annual concert, and when they were worked hard and struggled bravely, and out of their little savings had always a guinea to spare for any miserable member of "the profession." Lucy Lavrock is dead now, and Martha is Lady Quibbs, rich and happy, though childless; she now works as hard at doing good as she used to do in teaching singing, is the most modest, unassuming, dearest little Lady Bountiful that ever lived, and is still so devoted to music that you may be sure of finding her wherever anything good is to be heard. Let us mingle with the crowd which, steadily increasing in bulk, has been ever passing onwards while we have been waiting here, and which is composed of ladies and gentlemen, most of whom are in evening dress; let us go with them up the stairs and take our chance of the amusement in store for us. It may be that we shall see those sable minstrels, whose curiously and constantly repeated boast it is that they have never played out of London. We may have the luck to behold Mr. Farquhar Flote's London Life, in which that distinguished entertainer dives under the table every five minutes, and swims to the surface again in quite a different character; or to hear Mr. Stentor read a selection from the Ballads of British Bagmen. No, a different fate is ours; when we arrive at the top of the staircase we follow on into the great hall, and, from a programme which is placed in our hands, we learn that one of the series of instrumental and vocal performances, known as the Monday Popular Concerts, is about to commence.

As, from the determined aspect of the people in the immediate neighbourhood of our stalls, we should probably be instantly put to death if we ventured to move, speak, or cough when the programme was once entered upon, we will take advantage of the few moments left us to look around. The hall seems full in every part. In the stalls the people are rustling and nodding, and getting rid of any superfluous excitement before settling down into that severe decorum which classical music always demands; in the galleries, where morning dress is for the most part the rule, they are taking off coats and cloaks, and seeing how the music-books with which many of the occupants are provided can be wielded with the smallest amount of inconvenience, while from immediately behind the grand piano on the platform to the boundary wall, the orchestra is black with human beings ranged in semicircles above each other, tier after tier.

Any of one's acquaintances in the stalls? Several of course. The small wiry gentleman with the thin beardless cheeks, the bright sunken eye, the close-cropped hair, is Mr. Justice Judex, now the dignified and impartial judge, erst the bold and brilliant advocate, the lucid reasoner, the silver-tongued orator, the wary tactician in debate. Throughout his life he has been foremost in everything; in the hunting-field and the boudoir he has been as much at home as on the bench; but music is the one passion of his life to which he has been most constant. During the whole of the day just past he has been listening to interminable arguments, wearying in themselves, yet requiring the keenest attention, the most evenly-balanced intellect; now, two minutes after the first notes of the opening quintet strike upon his ear, you will see him leaning back in his chair, his chin resting on his hand, his whole soul rapt, enchanted, beatified. What to him are sittings in banco and rules nisi? What to him Themis in comparison with Euterpe? What to him the double-handed sword of justice in comparison with the horsehair bow with which M. Piatti is extracting such ravishing sounds? Through the mind of that man, softened and attuned by Mozart's wondrous melodies, what reminiscences may float! Thoughts of the times ere he made his first coup, when he was young and briefless, and sat in his shabby chambers awaiting the attorneys who would not come; perhaps even at days earlier than that—of the cathedral city on the bright and shining river where his boyhood was passed, and where he would sit much as he sits now, fascinated and entranced by the playing of the organist or singing of the anthem.

The tall man sitting next to him is Mr. Frank Farrance, of the Home Office, who has been dining with Mr. Justice Judex, and who, while liking good dinners, and proud to be taken notice of by his companion, does not care much for music, and occupies himself in making eyes at the governess in Mr. Hoddinott's family, who are seated close by. Great patrons of music are the Hoddinotts: the eldest daughter, Jemima, having, under the pseudonym of Aimée, composed several ballads, and the youngest son, with the long hair and spectacles, being shrewdly suspected of being the Wolfgang, who withers the musical world in the columns of the Highbury Warder. And the Hebraic element is omnipresent; the De Lypeys, of Tavistock-square, and the Van Sheens, of Woburn-place, fill up an entire row, and sit, the males some curly and some bald, the females some flat-banded, some frizzed, some ringleted, but all bland, shiny, and oleaginous, beating time and grunting deeply. Little Mr. Moss, the lawyer from Thavies Inn, is there too, and with him Mr. Moysey, the diamond merchant from Amsterdam. As a rule, the female denizens of the stalls are not pretty, the male occupants of the fauteuils are not young—but all are intensely interested in what is going on, and join together in silencing any one who may dare to speak with a deep and prolonged hish-h-h. The same preoccupation and interest are noticeable in the galleries, where the people are much of the ordinary stamp of theatrical audiences, many of those amongst them who are supposed to be in evening dress wearing the skimpy little red opera-cloaks and the feeble artificial flower so much in vogue with the frequenters of the dress-circle when the pieces played are not attractive, but it is in the audience seated in the orchestra that the spectator will find his chief cause for speculation and wonderment.

There is no attempt at evening dress here; the muddy boots of most of the men, the draggled dresses of many of the women, show that they have walked hither in their work-a-day clothes, probably straight from their labours, to this their greatest recreation. A shilling is the sum which each has paid for admission, and the most casual observation would show that in many cases it was certainly as much as could be afforded. Here are pale, worn-looking women, governesses by the day, the half-day, the hour, who leave their mean lodgings in the early morning and tramp about from house to house, bearing neglect, insolence, contumely—the rage of spoiled children, the insults of vulgar parents, the contempt of pampered servants—who hammer away from hour to hour at the rudiments of French and English, who strike the scarcely responsive notes of the dull piano with listless finger, and who, from year's end to year's end, are running up and down the scales, practising the eternal Czerny's exercises, and the immortal "A vous dirai-je." In this series of concerts, and one or two others equally good and equally cheap, lies the sole recreation in which these good people indulge. There they come, arriving at the same time, sitting, as I am told, nearly always in the same places, following note by note all that is played or sung in the music-books which they have brought with them; enrapt during the performance, enthusiastic at its close. The male denizens of the orchestra are, for the most part, of the same rank in life: small clerks and shopmen, who, with other tastes, would be found in the music-hall or in the billiard-saloon, but who, curiously enough, seem to prefer the dreamy Gluck to the Jolly Bash, the sonata in A major to the spot stroke. Here and there are traces of a foreign element among them, but the majority are poor, simple, hard-working English people. The remainder of the audience in the orchestra is recruited from the ranks of the enthusiasts. Real "fanatici per la musica" they would rather pay stall price for a seat in the orchestra, than a shilling for the best stall in the hall. They can hear, it is true, in the body of the hall. But in the orchestra they can also see. They can watch Herr Joachim's nimble bow, they can greedily survey the fingering of Madame Arabella Goddard, and of Mr. Charles Hallé, and if any of these incomparable artists *were* to trip or stumble (though, to be sure, the idea is preposterous) the orchestra enthusiasts would be the first to note and to shudder at the awful fact.

As you enter, either from Piccadilly or Regent-street (for our Hall has two approaches, though the first-named can scarcely be looked upon as worthy of it), you will have noticed among the mural advertisements a certain number of print portraits of gentlemen attired in faultless evening costume, with great development of shirt-cuff and watch-chain. These gentlemen, who are also remarkable for

their heads of hair, and for their very thick moustaches, are the principals in the band of nigger minstrels, which has been so long and so deservedly popular. There is a stern, truculent, punch-your-head kind of expression in the portraits, which you can scarcely reconcile with the tender warbling of "Dey've laid her 'neath de gooseberry-bush," or the more pointed satire of "Wake up, ole Sal." But it is, perhaps, the burnt cork which softens and refines all. Anyhow, it is certain that these minstrels, who, clever singers though they be, would certainly not have proved attractive for so long had they preserved their natural appearance, have been stationary at our Hall for years, and seldom or never sing to any but a full room. This is probably due to the fact that they appeal to that large class of the public which, while musically uneducated, takes delight in soft and simple melodies; that the tenor voices are exceptionally pure and sweet, and that the harmony of the chorus is excellent. It is to be regretted that the words of the ballads are very much inferior to the music, and that the endeavour to give local colour destroys the sentiment which is evidently intended. For instance, when one hears a singer utter something like the following:

> Dey've laid her 'neath de gooseberry-bush,
> By de ole plantation's side,
> De 'possum and de jackal sing
> A requiem o'er my bride;
> De alligator swims around,
> De walrus is at play,
> But my love will nebber more be found,
> I've lost my charming May.
> CHORUS—Lost! lost! my May, my charming, charming May, &c.

it is impossible to be much affected, however sympathetic may be the voice and manner. As for the comic songs, they are about as ghastly as the usual run of such ditties, but the conversations between Mr. Bones and his chief are by no means unamusing, more especially when they climax, after an immense amount of yuck-yucking and buffoonery, in the chief's suddenly dignified rebuke, "Come, sir, no more of this—Gentle Annie!"

Also in the winter, in our Hall, take place the great billiard-matches, at which both money and reputation are at stake, and which are attended by all the principal supporters of this now extraordinarily popular game. The matches are held sometimes in the large hall, but when that is occupied, in a large square apartment situate in a remote corner of this apparently inexhaustible building of ours. Tiers of seats surround the apartment for the spectators, while in the centre of the room is a splendid billiard-table, on either side of which stand Crook and Dobbin, the antagonists, both young men, remarkably well got up, in evening dress, and with their coats off, looking like two gentlemen in a club dressing-room about to wash their hands previous to dinner. The audience is an assemblage of heterogeneous particles; men from the "Rag," and other military clubs, men who once belonged to the "Rag," but who have now faded away into provincial towns, where they loaf their lives away in the billiard-rooms attached to the hotels, and try to add to their narrow incomes by pool practice. Keen-eyed men these, watching every stroke with intense interest, intent on "picking up wrinkles," and savagely objurgant against noise and interruption of the play. Men about town, calm, cool, and insouciant, and lads from the universities successfully copying their dress, and unsuccessfully aping their manners; hunting-men from the shires, up in town on account of the frost, frequenters of Tattersall's, and the usual selvage and fringe of openly-professed discounters, and attorneys lending money in secret, which always attends the meetings of any portion of the sporting world. Dotted here and there amidst this motley crew are one or two characters who, if they were recognised, would be thought oddly out of place; an amateur artist of renown, a contributor of dreamy philosophical articles to a weighty periodical, a hard-headed civil engineer, who is so much in demand one would have thought every minute of his time had been absorbed by his profession; there they are, apparently as intent upon the game as the reporter of the Sporting Press, who makes a memorandum of every telling stroke in his note-book. There is plenty of drinking and smoking, but the game is carried on with perfect decorum, and almost in silence. Loud betting was at one time the practice, but it interfered with the comfort of the players, and was put a stop to; now, occasionally, an enthusiastic gentleman will intimate his desire to back his opinion by holding up his five or ten fingers to a friend on the opposite side of the room, who responds with promptitude, and the bet is booked. What newspaper reporters of a police case indicate by "sensation," is expressed after a failure which should have been a success by a prolonged murmur of "a-a-ah," and a specially clever stroke is loudly applauded.

This happened notably on the last occasion of our visit, when Crook, getting the two balls into a corner immediately hovering over the pocket, made eleven cannons in the space of a minute, without pocketing one, being a portion of a break of one hundred and sixteen, played with the most consummate tact and skill. Else, the game proceeds in silence, nothing being heard but the monotonous cry of the marker noting its progress.

In the summer, the classical concerts and the sable minstrels go on just the same, supplemented by the fancy fairs, the public meetings, the flower shows, and the other exhibitions, so that our Hall is the constant centre of attraction. So it ought to be, for it was a costly experiment, costing forty-three thousand pounds to build and furnish. Its architect was Mr. Owen Jones, whose special powers of internal decoration were never more effectively displayed, and it was opened on March the 25th, 1858, in the presence of the late Prince Consort. Long may it prosper!

TWO RUSSIAN JESTERS.

Jokes, like bills, require names to back them; and it will be found that, in every nation, some one personage, real or mythical, is selected as the lay-figure upon which all popular jests are by common consent displayed. The English have their Joe Miller, the Germans their Schiltbürger and their Tyll Eulenspiegel, the Americans their Colonel Crockett, the Orientals their Nasireddin et Khejah; and, in the same way, the chosen godfathers of Russian humour are Balâkireff, the jester, and Marshal Suvôroff. The latter name has long since passed into history; but the former requires some introduction to non-Russian readers. Popular traditions unite in representing Balâkireff as the constant attendant of Peter the Great, who figures largely in all the stories attached to the name of his buffoon. Many of these stories are probably the fabrication of a later age; but a fair proportion of them bear marks of authenticity, and, as fair specimens of national humour, are worth quoting.

On one occasion Balâkireff begged permission of his imperial master to attach himself to the guard stationed at the palace, and Peter, for the sake of the joke, consented—warning him at the same time that any officer of the guard who happened to lose his sword, or to be absent from his post when summoned, was punished with death. The newly-made officer promised to do his best; but the temptation of some good wine sent to his quarters that evening by the czar, "to moisten his commission," proved too strong for him; and he partook so freely as to become completely "screwed." While he was sleeping off his debauch, Peter stole softly into the room, and carried off his sword. Balâkireff, missing it on awaking, and frightened out of his wits at the probable consequences, could devise no better remedy than to replace the weapon with his own professional sword of lath, the hilt and trappings of which were exactly similar to those of the guardsmen. Thus equipped, he appeared on parade the next morning, confident in the assurance of remaining undetected, if not forced to draw his weapon. But Peter, who had doubtless foreseen this contingency, instantly began storming at one of the men for his untidy appearance, and at length faced round upon Balâkireff with the stern order, "Captain Balâkireff, draw your sword and cut that sloven down!"

The poor jester, thus brought fairly to bay, laid his hand on his hilt as if to obey, but at the same time exclaimed fervently, "Merciful Heaven! let my sword be turned into wood!"

And drawing the weapon, he exhibited in very deed a harmless lath. Even the presence of the emperor was powerless to check the roar of laughter which followed; and Balâkireff was allowed to escape.

The jester's ingenuity occasionally served him in extricating others from trouble as well as himself. A cousin of his, having fallen under the displeasure of the czar, was about to be executed; and Balâkireff presented himself at court to petition for a reprieve. Peter, seeing him enter, and at once divining his errand, shouted to him, "It's no use your coming here; I swear that I will *not* grant what you are going to ask!"

Quick as thought, Balâkireff dropped on his knees, and exclaimed. "Peter Alexeicvitch, I bescech you put that scamp of a cousin of mine to death!" Peter, thus caught in his own tramp, had no choice but to laugh, and send a pardon to the offender.

During one of the czar's Livonian campaigns, a thick fog greatly obstructed the movements of the army. At length a pale watery gleam began to show itself through the mist, and two of the Russian officers fell to disputing whether this were the sun or not. Balâkireff, happening to pass by at that moment, they appealed to him to

decide. "Is that light yonder the sun, brother?"

"How should I know?" answered the jester; "I've never been here before!"

At the end of the same campaign several of the officers were relating their exploits, when Balâkireff stepped in among them. "I've got a story to tell, too," cried he, boastfully; "a better one than any of yours!"

"Let us hear it, then," answered the officers; and Balâkireff began.

"I never liked this way of fighting, all in a crowd together, which they have now-a-days; it seems to me more manly for each to stand by himself; and therefore I always went out alone. Now it chanced that one day, while reconnoitring close to the enemy's outposts, I suddenly espied a Swedish soldier lying on the ground just in front of me! There was not a moment to lose; he might start up and give the alarm. I drew my sword, rushed upon him, and at one blow cut off his right foot!"

"You fool!" cried one of the listeners, "you should rather have cut off his head!"

"So I would," answered Balâkireff, with a grin, "but somebody else had done that already!"

At times Balâkireff pushed his waggeries too far, and gave serious offence to his formidable patron. On one of these occasions the enraged emperor summarily banished him from the court, bidding him "never appear on Russian soil again." The jester disappeared accordingly; but a week had hardly elapsed when Peter, standing at his window, espied his disgraced favourite coolly driving a cart past the very gates of the palace. Foreseeing some new jest, he hastened down, and asked with pretended roughness, "How dare you disobey me, when I forbade you to show yourself on Russian ground?"

"I havn't disobeyed you," answered Balâkireff, coolly; "I'm not on Russian ground now!"

"Not on Russian ground?"

"No; this cart-load of earth that I'm sitting on is Swedish soil. I dug it up in Finland only the other day!"

Peter, who had doubtless begun already to regret the loss of his jester, laughed at the evasion, and restored him to favour. Some Russian writers embellished this story (a German version of which figures in the adventures of Tyll Eulenspiegel) with the addition that Peter, on hearing the excuse, answered, "If Finland be Swedish soil now, it shall be Russian before long"—a threat which he was not slow to fulfil.

The stories told of Marshal Suvôroff are of a different order, and display, better than whole pages of description, the wonderful way in which he contrived to adapt himself to the rude spirits with whom he had to deal, without losing one jot of his authority. What Napoleon was to the French army, Suvôroff was to that of Russia; now jesting with a soldier, and now rebuking a general; one day sharing a ration of black bread beside a bivouac fire, and the next speaking as an equal to princes and potentates. In fact, the two great sponsors of Russian wit form a most picturesque contrast. Balâkireff has very much the character of a spaniel in a lion's cage—admiring, even, while mocking his formidable patron—behaving towards him with a half-waggish, half-affectionate familiarity—perpetually offending, and perpetually forgiven. Suvôroff comes before us as an uncrowned king, one whose authority needed no outward symbol; an autocrat of Nature's making, full of a rough, hearty familiarity, that was in no danger of breeding contempt, and surrounded by men who enjoyed the bonhomie, while they dreaded the displeasure of the little, pug-nosed, grimy man, who was in their eyes the incarnation of earthly power and grandeur.

It must be owned, however, that in his own peculiar vein of pleasantry, the old marshal more than once met with his match. One of his favourite jokes was to confuse a man by asking him unexpectedly, "How many stars are there in the sky?"

On one occasion he put this question to one of his sentries, on a bitter January night, such as only Russia can produce. The soldier, not a whit disturbed, answered coolly, "Wait a little, and I'll tell you;" and he deliberately began to count, "One, two, three," &c. In this way he went gravely on to a hundred, at which point Suvôroff, who was already half frozen, thought it high time to ride off, not, however, without inquiring the name of this ready reckoner. The next day the latter found himself promoted, and the story (which Suvôroff told with great glee to his staff) speedily made its way through the whole army.

On another occasion one of his generals of division sent him a sergeant with despatches, at the same time recommending the bearer to Suvôroff's notice. The marshal, as usual, proceeded to test him by a series of whimsical questions; but the catechumen was equal to the occasion. "How far is it to the moon?" asked Suvôroff.

"Two of your excellency's forced marches," answered the sergeant.

"If your men began to give way in a battle, what would you do?"

"I'd tell them that just behind the enemy's line there was a waggon-load of corn-brandy."

"Supposing you were blockaded, and had no provisions left, how would you supply yourself?"

"From the enemy!"*

"How many fish are there in the sea?"

"As many as have not been caught."

And so the examination went on, till Suvôroff, finding his new acquaintance armed at all points, at length asked him as a final poser, "What is the difference between your colonel and myself?"

"The difference is this," replied the soldier, coolly; "my colonel cannot make me a captain, but your excellency has only to say the word!"

Suvôroff, struck by his shrewdness, kept his eye upon the man, and in no long time after actually gave him the specified promotion.

Suvôroff always affected the utmost brevity both in speaking and writing, the terseness of his despatches being almost unrivalled. The correspondence with Prince Potemkin, relative to the assault of Ismail, is unique in military history. Potemkin, copying the brevity of his general, wrote to him thus: "Marshal, you will take Ismail within three days, at whatever cost. —Potemkin." The day after the letter arrived Suvôroff carried the town by storm, with a loss of fifteen thousand men to himself, and thirty-eight thousand to the enemy—summing up the fearful tragedy in one doggrel couplet, which, literally translated, runs as follows:

"Praise to God, and praise to thee!
Ismail's ta'en, and there I be."

The anecdotes of the great marshal's eccentricities—his habit of wandering about the camp in disguise, his whim of giving the signal for assault by crowing like a cock, his astounding endurance of heat and cold, his savage disregard of personal comfort and neatness—are beyond calculation; but perhaps the most characteristic of all is his appearance in 1799 at the Austrian court, then one of the most brilliant in Europe. On being shown to the room prepared for him (a splendid apartment, filled with costly mirrors and rich furniture), this modern Diogenes said simply, "Turn out all that rubbish, and shake me down some straw." An Austrian grandee who came to visit him was startled at these preparations, and still more so at the first sight of the marshal's "baggage," which consisted of two coarse shirts and a tattered cloak tied up in a bundle.

"Is that enough for winter?" asked the astounded visitor.

"The winter's the father of us Russians," answered Suvôroff, with a grin; "besides, you don't feel the cold when you're riding full gallop."

"But when you're tired of riding, what do you do?"

"Walk."

"And when you're tired of walking?"

"Run."

"And do you never sleep, then?" asked the petrified questioner.

"Sometimes, when I've nothing better to do," replied Suvôroff, carelessly; "and when I want to have a very luxurious nap, I take off one of my spurs."

The thunder-struck Austrian bowed and retired, doubtless considerably enlightened in his ideas of a Russian general.

It is worth while to chronicle (however out of place it may appear in a collection of jests) one more story of Suvôroff, that which tells how the grim veteran, already far on the road to the bloodiest of his campaigns, rode back for miles through the blinding storm to take one last look at his sleeping children, kissed and blessed them with passionate earnestness, and then rushed away like a whirlwind upon his mission of destruction. Such a man deserved more merciful judgment than the stinging epitaph written upon him by a wit of the nation which wrought his downfall: "A good soldier, but a bad general; a good servant, but a bad courtier; a good Russian, but a bad European."

* Napoleon is said to have given the same answer to his examiners at Brienne.

LELGARDE'S INHERITANCE.

IN TWELVE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER XI.

So our visit to Hollyfield parsonage was a failure, and that which we paid, under Mr. Benson's auspices, to Mrs. Hatterick, at the farm, was not more successful. Though Mrs. Hatterick, a disagreeable-looking, hard woman, became courtesy itself when first she gathered from our inquiries that the boy she had slighted was somebody after all, she could give us no information; and probably a moment's reflection showed her that her treatment of him had not been of a nature which would enable her to establish any claim

upon him, for she froze up again into stolid indifference, would not remember the names of any of the gentlemen lodgers to whom Mr. Benson had referred, would not make any suggestions, would not be helpful or pleasant. Her husband had died a few months before, and we found no one able to help us. So, weary and dispirited, Lelgarde confessed that there was nothing for it but to return the way we came. Never did any one mourn over losing an inheritance as she did over being compelled to keep one. Her distress was a marvel and an amusement, not only to Mr. Seymour Kennedy, whose visits, however, became few and far between, but to Mr. Graves, the family lawyer, who just at this time left London, and established himself in a little whitewashed house in the outskirts of the village of Trembleton, giving up all business, except the management of the estate, which he did not like to relinquish after so many years. By his advice, Lelgarde remained passive for the present, keeping the whole matter secret; but it was too manifest that all the zest of life had deserted her; and how gladly would I have seen the heir appear, to have my Lelgarde her old self in looks and cheerfulness, as well as in fortune. Since the mystery had been cleared up, her midnight terrors had ceased, but she lived, I was sure, in constant dread of their recurrence, for at the bottom of her heart, or rather of her fancy, there still lurked a belief that she had really received a spiritual visitation, instead of being, as I feel certain she was, merely the subject of a curious trick of memory. She avoided the room which we were wont to call Miss Hilda's; she shrank from all mention of her or her story, and once, when we passed the open door, and saw the unfinished picture, she burst into sudden tears.

"I have done my best, God knows I have!" she cried, in an agony of distress, and I could only soothe and pet her till her sobs subsided, and she was calm enough to listen to my oft-repeated arguments that what was not her fault could in no wise be imputed to her. Still I did not wonder at her depression; her position was a most painful one, and I understood the sigh with which she said:

"I shall never marry."

"You must marry somebody so rich that he will not mind giving up Athelstanes," I said, trying to speak lightly; but she coloured rosy red, and answered gravely:

"No, I do not think that is at all likely to happen."

Soon after, she told me that she felt strongly her own helpless position as a woman; that though Mr. Graves professed to be making inquiries, she did not think he put any heart into it, and she knew he would rejoice if the missing heir never made his appearance.

"If I were a man," she said, "I would never rest. I would wander the world over till I found him."

In spite of Lelgarde's discontent, Mr. Graves had really done his best; he had, for months—for by this time summer was merging into autumn—advertised in the Times, and various other papers, inviting Henry Hamilton to apply to him at his office at Trembleton, and offering a reward to any one who could give well-substantiated news of him—but no one had as yet appeared.

One lovely afternoon in September I had tempted Lelgarde out for a walk. She had grown so listless now, that it was not easy to stir her up to take exercise, but on this occasion she led the way to the knoll whence we had so fine a view of the little domain. There we sat silent, and I grieved to see that slow tears began to trickle down her face as she gazed, and I noticed more than ever how pale that face was growing, and how thin the hands that were clasped upon her knee. The sight overcame all my self-control.

"My darling, my darling," I cried out suddenly, "this is killing you."

"Yes," she answered, quite quietly, and then, I suppose, the despair in my face struck her, for she put her hand in mine, and said:

"Never mind, Joany, dear; perhaps all will come right. 'When night is dreariest, morn is nearest,' you know."

There was a hasty tread, a rustling in the bushes. We were near the public road, and there was nothing unusual in foot-passengers coming that way, but nevertheless Lelgarde started violently, and sprang up. The wayfarer stopped short. I had one instant's view of a tall, broad-chested figure in light-coloured garments, knapsack on shoulder, and a bronzed and bearded face, before Lelgarde's glad cry and my own eyes told me who it was—Harry Goldie—older, browner, broader—man instead of boy, but Harry Goldie still; good-humoured, gay, and pleasant to look upon, as in the olden time. I could have blessed him for the brilliant happiness which shone at once on my Lelgarde's face, and I gave a hearty hand-shake in answer to his eager grip.

"Well, this is a surprise!" was his first audible sentence. "How do you come here? I had no idea——"

"Nay, how do you come here?" returned my sister; "it is our part of the country. I hoped you were come to pay us your promised visit."

"Indeed, I had no idea that I was in your neighbourhood. I am making a sketching tour, and yesterday I found a sudden call of business would bring me here — to Trembleton — so I have been walking across country; and rather pretty country it is. Whose is that fine old place?"

I am sure Lelgarde was going to say, "It is mine," but she changed her form of speech, and said, "It is Athelstanes."

"Indeed! It is very picturesque," said Harry, and he suddenly froze up into a company tone and manner, which, I could see, pained and surprised my sister. I could see, too, that there was a perplexity in her mind. Mr. Graves had made her solemnly promise not to reveal the state of things to any living soul without his permission, and her wish to welcome her old friend hospitably was warring with her great repugnance to take upon herself the position of mistress of Athelstanes. Hospitality, however, carried the day, and she begged him to stop and rest a little while with us, but the consciousness of an arrière-pensée made her manner so stiff, that I was not surprised to hear Harry decline almost as stiffly. A wise woman would have left things to settle themselves, but I am not wise, I suppose, and I could not stand the fading of pleasure on my Lelgarde's sweet face, so I put in a word to press him to come home with us for half an hour, and he consented after a few moments' demur. Through the plantations we went, treading out sweet smells from the damp grass, and through the gardens, to the house; and, as every step revealed more and more the grandeur of Lelgarde's kingdom, I saw poor Harry Goldie grow graver and more constrained.

By an accident which, on looking back upon it, struck me as a strange one, some trifle had gone wrong with the drawing-room chimney, and the evening fire, which was beginning to be needful, had been lighted in Miss Hilda's room. The butler met us with this information, and Lelgarde could not show her reluctance to entering the room before him and our guest; indeed, I think, it was forgotten in the gladness of this new event. We sat down and talked; but it was all made talk, not talk that flowed naturally, as in the days gone by. Harry was awkward and depressed, and though, in answer to our questions, he told of his successes in his career, it was with a sigh, as if they were not worth much to him; while Lelgarde soon grew serious too, and shrank from every mention of Athelstanes and of our life there, as if it stung her; and yet I felt sure that now, for the first time, she was regretting the probable loss of her property. In every pause, and they were many, I saw Harry's eye turning to the unfinished picture, which might well excite his curiosity, and I dreaded each moment that he would refer to it. He did at last.

"That is a beautiful face," he said; "why has that picture never been finished?"

Lelgarde winced visibly, and she began: "It was in the house when I came——" and then stopped short.

"It must be by a good artist."

"No, I believe not; at least it is not by a celebrated one."

"That may be, but he was a good artist for all that," said Harry, and then he pulled up short at Lelgarde's languid answer.

"Very possibly;" which certainly sounded as if she wished to snub down his remarks. Soon after he sprang up, as if he were eager to be gone, and yet felt it a wrench to go.

"Good-bye," he said; "it has been a great pleasure to see you again; to see you in your kingdom." And he smiled a little.

Lelgarde held out her hand. I saw that she could scarcely keep from tears. Harry took the hand, and burst out as if he could not help it:

"I shall carry away a picture of you here in your grand old house. I am right glad to have seen you so bright and happy."

"Happy?" broke from Lelgarde, suddenly. "Oh! Harry, never judge from outside things. I am not one bit happy— if you only knew——"

"My dear, remember your promise," I interposed. Why was Harry Goldie, of all people, to be honoured with her confidence?

She checked herself at once, and said, with her little air of dignity, "Yes, I have not forgotten it. Harry, I cannot invite you to come here again; you will know why some day; but I hope we shall meet sometimes. Are you going to stay long at Trembleton?"

"I really don't know; I fancy not," said Harry, with bewildered looks; "but Miss Atheling, you must let me ask, could I,

without intruding on your confidence, be of any help to you? Indeed, I should rejoice most sincerely."

"Ah! if you could, Harry," she said, shaking her head; "but, tell me, where are you going now? Have you any friends at Trembleton?"

"I did not know that I had till some days ago," he answered, "but it appears I have. Do you know anything of a certain Mr. Graves? I suppose a lawyer—a man who has an office there, any way."

"Mr. Graves? why he is my lawyer."

"Oh, then, it must be all right; I was half afraid of some hoax," he said, with a look of considerable relief; then, in a reserved tone, "Yes, it is with him that I have some business. I hardly know yet of what sort."

The wild, almost impossible hope which darted into my own mind, I saw reflected on Lelgarde's face: she hesitated, she coloured, then, more as if speaking to herself than addressing him, she whispered:

"Do you know anything of Henry Hamilton?"

There was a start, a look of blank, almost angry surprise, a sudden reddening over cheek and brow, and he asked quickly:

"How do you know my name?"

"Then it is so," cried Lelgarde, her sweet sensitive face one sunbeam of genuine rejoicing, and she held out both hands. Had Harry so chosen he might have made it an embrace, but he only took the hands in his, and looked astonished into her eyes, as she went eagerly on:

"My dear cousin, oh, how we have looked for you. And now it is all come right, here, in your own house, in this very room, under your mother's picture. Oh, thank Heaven!"

Agitated weeping cut her short, and, as I received her into my arms, and met Harry's look of utter bewilderment, my only thought was to be quit of him till I could restore her to calmness.

"Go to Mr. Graves, and he will tell you what it all means," I said; and he obeyed without a word, like a man well-nigh stunned with amazement. For me, I gave thanks from my heart. It might have been better, but oh, dear me, it might have been much worse!

CHAPTER XII.

HARRY was sober and staid enough when next we saw him, which was not till the following day. He came, accompanied by Mr. Graves, who had put him through a rigorous examination, eliciting few facts but those we already knew, except that when he left Hollyfield, taking the first name that came to hand, one that had belonged to a dead playmate, he told us, he went to London, and was kindly befriended by Mr. Lascelles, who, during his summer stay at the farm, had become much interested in the bright-faced boy, with his inherited talent for art. The rest we knew. I could readily understand how Harry's proud young spirit, chafing against the false position, had come to the impetuous resolve of casting off a name with such associations, and making a new one in a new world.

"Hang the money, and all that; nothing shall induce me to take it," were almost the first words I heard him say; "but I am glad that I need not be ashamed of my mother."

It was as well he should think so, I reflected, and I liked him better and better, as I saw what tender, chivalrous pity was ready to spring up for the weak woman who had marred so much of his life by mere cowardice and procrastination. As to his generous wish not to take his inheritance, that no one could of course give in to, as Mr. Graves made him understand in a cut and dried sentence that carried conviction with it; proceding at once to lay plans for going with him first to Hollyfield, and then to London, thoroughly to establish his identity by means of Mr. Lascelles's and Mr. Benson's testimony; a step which the lawyer pronounced quite necessary before Lelgarde's abdication, willing and absolute as it was, could be considered final.

"This will not make you hate me, will it?" poor Harry said to her, in piteous appeal; and, in fact, after her first outspoken affection and joy, there had come a reaction, which made her grave and reserved enough to justify the question. She smiled, however, as she assured him that a cousin was a valuable possession to such a relationless creature as herself, but the smile was constrained, and the speech a set one. I did not wonder that Harry looked gloomy, and sighed deeply.

He slept that night at Mr. Graves's house, and on the following day they started on their journey. Within a few days they were back again, bringing such ample proofs as entirely settled the question. Henry Hamilton's career was distinctly traced from his birth to the present hour; it only remained for him to take possession.

It was the very afternoon of their return, and I thought that they had both left Athelstanes for Mr. Graves's house, when,

coming into the drawing-room, I was aware of Harry, standing by the fire, his arm on the mantelpiece, his forehead leaning upon it, the picture of everything that was disconsolate. At my exclamation of surprise he raised his head, and I saw tears on his face, tears which he was too utterly cast down to care to conceal. I pretended not to see, and fell to poking the fire. Suddenly he broke out:

"I believe that money was invented by the devil himself to make mischief, and break one's heart."

"What is the matter?" I asked, half inclined to laugh, for my heart was lighter than it had been for many a day.

"Matter? How can you ask? Can't you see she hates the sight of me? And no wonder, coming to take away her home, and make a mess of her life. And now I have gone and made it worse than ever."

"What have you been doing?"

"Making an ass of myself, as I always do; speaking out just when I ought to have held my tongue. Any fool might have seen it was the wrong moment, just the most insulting, beastly, stupid thing I could have done. Only I thought that she might have seen, have known that it is nothing new."

A light broke upon me suddenly.

"Have you been — speaking to Lelgarde?" I asked, vaguely. And Harry answered not, nor stirred from his dejected attitude, till we heard the slow sweep of drapery, always the announcement of Lelgarde's dignified step.

"She will think there is no getting rid of me," he said, with a nervous start, and vanished over the low window-sill just as her hand was on the door.

I was sometimes a little afraid of Lelgarde, and never had she looked so unapproachable as now. Her face was flushed, and her eyes nearly extinguished. She had evidently been crying her heart out; but she looked full at me, as if she defied me to make any remark thereon, and seated herself in silence at the writing-table, absorbed apparently in pen, ink, and account-book.

"Joan," she said presently, in a dry, business tone, "Mr. Graves says that it would be unreasonable and unkind to refuse the provision which my cousin wishes to make for us, and I am anxious beyond everything to avoid any appearance of ill-will; but the sum he named is preposterous. I am writing to tell Mr. Graves that I have no objection to consenting that the estate should be charged with three hundred pounds a year for me, which will enable us to live."

"But, my dear——"

"Let me finish," she said, impatiently; "we will leave this house to-morrow. The under-housemaid here, who is just the servant we shall want, will stay with us, and she can pack up and follow us in a few days."

"Would you mind telling me where we are to go?" I asked, meekly.

"I told you," returned Lelgarde, petulantly" (she never had), "that we will go back to our own old lodgings first and look about us; there are nice, cheap little places in the north of Scotland, or perhaps in Galway——"

"Yes; or in Nova Zembla, I dare say. Now, Lelgarde, you are really silly—no, don't look so—I *will* speak, and you *shall* listen. I do not know what your cousin has been saying to you, or you to him, but I feel quite sure that you have treated him abominably."

"You know nothing about it, Joan."

Then I was downright angry.

"Child," I said, "could you not see years ago that he worshipped the ground you trod on? But he could not speak while you had neither of you a penny—still less when you were rich, and he poor—but now——"

"Now he feels bound to ask me to be his wife, that I may not be turned out of Athelstanes," she cried, the angry tears gushing from her eyes; "it is just like him—honourable as he is—but this is a humiliation I may be spared," and up went the little proud Atheling head.

But I was not to be snubbed, and I went on trying to say something really cutting.

"Well, Lelgarde, I did not know that you thought so much about money."

Then she turned upon me with the grand air which sat so quaintly on her soft girlish beauty.

"You assume that I am attached to Mr. Hamilton; pray let me be free to act as I like in this matter above all others." And she swept off in a state of offended dignity, leaving me inwardly marvelling at the density of man and the perversity of woman.

When we met at dinner, she was all softness and sweetness, and in the evening she hung about me in fond penitence for her little ebullition of temper; but her resolution to depart the next day was still unshaken; and I felt that I dared not venture on the delicate ground again, and could only trust it all to love and time.

Shall I ever forget the night that fol-

lowed? I was dreaming that Lelgarde and I sat over the fire together, and that suddenly Miss Hilda, or rather her picture, stood before us, brandishing a torch, which filled all the room with smoke—that Lelgarde seized my arm, and cried in great terror, "She says she will destroy us all if I do not consent to marry him; but I never will——" and that, as I turned to her, begging her to consent, the smoke caught my breath. I struggled, choked, and started up in bed awake, to find myself still struggling and choking, and the smoke of my dream a very overpowering reality.

There was so much old woodwork about the house, and some of the old-fashioned kitchen arrangements were so perilous, that the dread of fire had never long been absent from me, and I felt in an instant that this dread was realised.

I was in one moment at Lelgarde's side; but she was so stupefied by the smoke that some seconds passed before I could rouse her, and precious time was lost; I remember wrapping her in her dressing-gown and a fur cloak, the first things that came to hand, and ringing the bell violently. I suppose I also threw on some covering myself, but it all seemed like a dream as I look back on it. The fire was in the wing which contained Miss Hilda's room, but it was fast spreading to the hall, and threatening the old oak staircase. We found afterwards that it had originated in the laundry—some carelessness of the servants, who were all in a state of gossip and bewilderment—the state of affairs having oozed out somehow, though the formal announcement was deferred till after our departure.

In the gallery we were met by a flock of screaming maids, while shouts from without assured us that the fire had been seen, and that help was at hand. At the stair-head Lelgarde stopped.

"Where is Mrs. Bracebridge?" she asked in her clear voice, audible amid the roar of sounds. No one knew; the old woman slept in a higher story, and was so hard of hearing, that the noise had probably failed to rouse her.

"She must be seen to," said my sister; "go on, Joan, I will join you;" and she sped away before I could stop her. In another moment I found myself seized by a man's arm—the butler's, as it turned out—and hurried along through smoke, and perilously close to flame, till blinded, breathless, and staggering, I felt the damp, cold air of night, and found myself among a dishevelled group out on the gravel sweep. And no Lelgarde.

I was rushing back to seek her, when the butler forcibly held me back.

"For God's sake don't, ma'am! Look at the staircase."

The old oak burnt like tinder, and the hand-rail was already blazing. At that same instant I saw Lelgarde appear at an upper window—that of Mrs. Bracebridge's room—alone, her hair streaming, her arms stretched out. She was probably crying for help, but her voice was drowned. I turned away in despair, and found my hand seized by Mrs. Bracebridge, who, crying bitterly, sobbed out that she had escaped among the first, and "Why, oh! why, had that sweet young lady gone into danger for her?" I shook her off, her tears infuriated me, and rushed up to some men who were bringing ladders. I pointed to the window, towards which the flames were already creeping, and implored them to lose no time. In one moment the longest ladder was fixed—agony! it was far too short. Two ladders lashed together only reached to the heavy ledge which ran round the window immediately below—a ledge so narrow that it would barely give a foothold for an instant. Lelgarde evidently saw it, and read her doom; she folded her hands. I knew she was praying; I tried to pray too, but oh! I could not. I could only send up one mighty cry of anguish. I felt a touch on my shoulder, and Harry's face, white and set, was close to mine.

"Is she there?" he asked. I pointed upwards.

"I see," and his eye measured the distance; "I think it will be all right," he said; and somehow I felt as if all were safe. There was a coolness in his eye, a steady resolve in his voice, like a tower of strength to rest on. One moment's hurried talk with the men, and then Harry, and one of the tallest of them, both mounted. What did they propose to do? A gasp from the breathless crowd announced that they were at the top of the ladder. For some seconds I could not look; but at last, forcing myself to raise my eyes, I saw the man mounted on the topmost rung, and supporting himself with his hands against the wall, while Harry, using his shoulders as a stepping-stone, swung himself up to the window-sill, and disappeared within the room.

Lelgarde told me afterwards that, in her terror and bewilderment, and fear for his safety, she had implored him to leave her to her fate, but that when he answered unceremoniously, "Nonsense! just let me put

my arm round your waist, and shut your eyes!" she had felt that he was her master, and had done, unquestioning, what he told her. Her instinctive trust in him gave her self-control, and enabled her to be perfectly still during the dreadful moment when he lifted her down into the arms of the man who was waiting to receive her; and in a few seconds more I had her fast in mine, and felt her poor dizzied head resting on my shoulder. Oh! the comfort of feeling her safe, with her heart throbbing against my own; but, in an instant, she started from me, to watch, with breathless anxiety, Harry's perilous descent. It was no easy matter; for precious moments had been spent in Lelgarde's rescue, and before the man could return to his assistance, smoke and flame were bursting from some of the windows fearfully near where he was. Lelgarde hid her face again:

"Pray, Joan, pray!" I heard her whisper with tightened breath; and pray I did, with all my soul. It was not for the master of Athelstanes, nor even for my Lelgarde's possible husband, but for Harry himself—the bright-faced boy of last year—the prompt, vigorous man, our stay and comfort on this eventful night—that my heart was pouring itself out in earnest supplication. And our prayers were heard. Cool head, strong nerves, and steadfast spirit did their work, and he was with us again to meet our eager, thankful welcome, and to read the unmistakable affection on Lelgarde's tearful face. She met him with outstretched hands—tried hard to thank him, but could not.

"Thank God!" was all she could murmur, and he echoed it, reverently bowing his head.

"Poor old house!" was Lelgarde's next remark; "I am afraid they are not saving much for you."

"Hang the old house! Let it go to blazes, as it is going!" was his answer; "I have got all I care to get out of it. Lelgarde, look me in the face. What good do you believe that house would do me, if you were not standing here, living, by my side?"

I heard no answer; I only saw that the hands were clasped tight and tighter yet; and then, in another instant, Harry was first among the workers, organising the efforts of the firemen just arrived from Trembleton, too late to be of much use, dashing into the smoke again, and bearing out enormous weights as if they were feathers—warning away those who were venturing too near—shaking off burning flakes and drenching showers as if he did not feel them; evidently quite changed in his opinion as to the value of what the old house contained. He took the command of everything, even more by dint of his natural superiority than because he was beginning to be recognised as master of Athelstanes, and thankfully I acknowledged him as the man that of all others I should have chosen as a husband for my darling, and marvelled at the wondrous workings of Providence.

The sun rose on a scene of ruin melancholy to look upon; the trodden down paddock, the heaps of rescued valuables, the dreary, smoke-blackened crowd; and there stood Harry and Lelgarde, amid the smouldering wreck of their ancestral home—hand clasped in hand—the happiest of human creatures.

Athelstanes has been rebuilt, and has been my happy home for many a year; but the name of Atheling has passed away for ever. Harry utterly refused to give up the one that had been his father's, and I am not sure that at the bottom of her heart Lelgarde had not a secret dread that Miss Etheldreda would find it impossible, under such circumstances, to rest in her grave; for she still half believes that she was really visited by the spirit of the poor mother, who could not be at peace till the wrong had been righted, and her son established in his inheritance. Harry and I smile, and hold our own belief—a solitary piece of disloyalty to our queen, whose dignity increases as her girlish grace declines. Be that as it may, no angry ghosts wander about Athelstanes now; perhaps they are scared away by the merry noises that resound through hall and corridor, perhaps appeased by the ever-increasing tribe of true Atheling faces that lift up blue eyes in solemn wonder to such of the family portraits as have survived the fire.

That of Hilda Atheling is not among the number, and it is better so; better that her memory should gently fade away, and the story of sorrow and evil-doing should be laid at rest for ever in her quiet grave.

Next week will be commenced

A NEW SERIAL STORY,

ENTITLED

THE YELLOW FLAG.

By EDMUND YATES,

Author of "Black Sheep," "Nobody's Fortune," &c.

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THE YELLOW FLAG.

BY EDMUND YATES,

AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "NOBODY'S FORTUNE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER I. CALVERLEY'S AGENT.

"AND you have conquered your dislike to leaving England, Tom; I am so glad! I felt certain you would give in to all our wishes, and see the wisdom of what we suggested to you."

"Well, I am not so certain about that, Ally; I don't go in for magnanimity; and I believe there is just that touch of obstinacy in my nature, which would induce me to run counter to any proposition which I saw being very hardly pressed. But when the suggestion was backed as it has been in this instance, I could not possibly doubt the sincerity of those who made it. And so, as you see, I am off!"

The place where occurred the conversation, a fragment of which has just been given, was a broad gravelled path, the favourite promenade of such of those worthy townspeople at Southampton as prefer the beauties of nature to the attractions of the shops in the High-street. On one side of it was the broad water glistening in the bright, cheerful October sun, on the other a large strip of greensward fringed on the far side with a row of shining, white-faced lodging-houses and hotels. On the promenade, the grim cannons—trophies taken during the Russian war—were surrounded by happy children, fearlessly climbing upon the now innocuous engines of death, a few boatmen were lazily pulling about within hailing distance of the shore, some young men were intent on watching the progress of two dogs, who were making a neck-and-neck race for a stick which had been thrown into the water for them to fetch, and the whole scene was one of pleasant cheerfulness.

Not out of harmony with it were the two persons whose words have been recorded. The first speaker was a young woman about two-and-twenty, of middle height, with a slight and graceful figure, and with a face which, while some would have called it pretty, would have been pronounced agreeable by all. The features were not regular, the nose was decidedly not classical, the mouth was a little too large, and the lips were a little too full; but there was a wonderful charm in the whiteness and regularity of the teeth, in the bright flash of the hazel eyes, in the crisp ripples of the dark brown hair, and in the clear, healthy red and white of her complexion. She was very becomingly dressed in a black silk gown, a dark grey jacket trimmed with velvet of the same colour, and a coquettish little black straw hat, and wore perfectly-fitting gloves and boots. Her companion was some twelve years older, a short, squarely-built man, whose breadth of shoulders and length of arms showed much muscular power. The lower part of his face was covered with a thick copper-red beard, the heavy moustaches falling over his mouth so completely, as to defy any revelation which might be made by the movements of that tell-tale organ; but his eyes, small and set close together, had a shifty expression, and round them there was that strained, seared look, which in some men is always indicative of dissipation and late hours. He wore a travelling suit of grey tweed, and a wideawake hat, while from under his beard the ends of a loosely-tied red silk neckerchief fluttered in the wind. Lounging along with a rolling gait, his hands buried in his jacket-pockets, he

seemed to take but little heed of his companion or her conversation, but paid particular attention to various nursemaids in charge of the children who were playing about, honouring each of them in turn with a long, peculiar, and offensive stare.

Thus engaged, he had half turned round after a particularly attractive damsel, when his companion wishing to resume the conversation, touched him on the arm, and said, "You will get to Ceylon in——"

"Oh, yes, in so many weeks—what matters one or two more or less! It will be jolly enough on board ship, and when I arrive—I arrive."

"I hope you have made up your mind to be steady, Tom, and to work hard. You have now the means for a capital start in life, and for my sake, if for nothing else, you ought to show yourself worthy of what has been done for you."

"Look here, Ally, don't preach," he said, turning sharply round to her; "everybody thinks they can have a fling at me, and it is, 'Oh Tom Durham this, and oh Tom Durham that,' until I am sick enough of it without being sermonised by my half-sister. Of course it was very kind of old Claxton—I beg your pardon," he said with a sneer, as he saw a shade pass over her face, "I ought to speak with more deference of your husband and my benefactor—of course it was very kind of Mr. Claxton to pay my passage out to Ceylon, and give me two thousand pounds to set myself up in business on my arrival there, but he is a very long-headed fellow, and he knows I am no fool, and if the agency turns out rightly, he will get a very considerable profit on his outlay."

"I am sure John has no such notion in doing this, Tom, and you have no right to impute such a motive to him."

"I impute nothing. I merely suggested, and after all, perhaps, he only did it out of love for you, Ally, whom he worships as the apple of his eye, in order to give your reckless half-brother a chance of reform—and to get him out of your way," he muttered under his breath.

"I am sure John is kindness itself," said Alice Claxton. "If there were nothing to prove that, it could be found in the fact of his wishing me to come down here to see the last of you."

"Nothing like giving the old—I mean your husband, every possible credit, Ally. You know just now he is away on one of his regular tours, and that therefore he wont miss you from Hendon."

"I know," said the girl, half pettishly, "these horrible business tours are the bane of my life, the only thing I have to complain about. However, John says he hopes it will not be very long before they are over, and then he will be always at home!"

"Does he?" said Tom Durham, looking at her keenly; "I would not have you depend upon that, Ally; I would not have you ask him to give up the business which takes him away. It is important for him that he should attend to it for the present, and indeed until there is no longer a necessity for him to do so."

"You need not speak so earnestly, Tom," said Alice, with a half-laugh, "I assure you I do not worry John about it; it is he who speaks about it much oftener than I do. He is constantly talking of the time when he shall be able to retire altogether, and take me away for a long foreign travel, perhaps to settle entirely abroad, he said, in Florence or Vienna, or some charming place of that kind."

"Old idiot!" muttered Tom Durham. "Why can't he leave well alone?"

"I told him," said Alice, not hearing or heeding the interruption, "that I am perfectly content with Rose Cottage. All I wish is, that he could be more there to enjoy it with me."

"Yes," said Tom Durham, with a yawn. "Well, that will come all right, as I told you, only don't you worry him about it, but leave it alone, and let it come right in its own way. Now look here, Ally. You had better go back to London by the eleven-fifteen train, so that we have only half an hour more together."

"But you know, Tom, John told me I might wait and see the Massilia start. Indeed, he particularly wished me to do so."

"My dear child, the Massilia does not sail until half-past two; and if you waited to see me fairly off, you would not have time to get over to the railway to catch the three o'clock train. Even if you did, you would not get to town until nearly six, and you would have a long dreary drive in the dark to Hendon. Now, if you go by the quarter-past eleven train, I shall see you off, and shall then be able to come back to Radley's, and write a few letters of importance before I go on board."

"Very well, Tom," said Alice; "perhaps it will be better, only John——"

"Never mind John on this occasion, Ally; he did not know at what time the Massilia sailed. Now, Ally, let us take one final turn and finish our chat. I am not going

to be sentimental, it is not in my line, but I think I like you better than anybody else in the world, though I did not take to you much at first. When I came back from sea, a boy of fifteen, and went home and found my father had married again, I was savage; and when he showed me a little baby lying in the cradle, and told me it was my half-sister, I hated you. But you were a sweet little child, and fended off many a rough word, and many a blow for the matter of that, which the governor would have liked to have given me, and I took to you; and when you grew up you did me a good turn now and then, and of course it is owing to you, one way or the other, that I have got John Claxton's two thousand pounds in my pocket at this moment. So I love you, and I leave you with regret, and I say this to you at parting. Take this envelope, and lock it away somewhere where it will be safe, and where you can lay your hand upon it at any moment. It contains the address of an old pal of mine—a friend I mean—one of the right sort, a staunch, tried, true, honest, upright fellow. Hard-working, and persevering too; such a kind of man that you may be astonished at his ever having been intimate with me. But he was and is, and I know that I may reckon upon him to the utmost! If ever you come to grief, if ever you are in trouble, no matter of what kind, go to the address which you will find there, and seek him out, and tell him all about it; I will warrant he will see you through it."

"Thank you, dear Tom; it is very kind and thoughtful of you to say this, but you know I have John and——"

"Yes, of course, you have John now, but there may be a time when—however, that is neither here nor there. There is the envelope, take it, and don't forget what I say. Now come round to the hotel and pack your bag; it is time for you to start."

The bell rang, and with a scream the engine attached to the eleven-fifteen train, for London, forged slowly out of the Southampton station. Tom Durham, with an expression of something like emotion on his face, stood upon the platform kissing his hand to Alice, who, with the tears in her eyes, leant back in the carriage and covered her face with her handkerchief. In a second-class compartment next to that which she occupied, were two middle-aged, plainly-dressed men, who had been observing the parting of the half-brother and sister with some interest.

"Was not that Tom Durham?" said one, as the train sped on its way.

"Right you are!" said the other. "I knew his face, but could not put a name to it. What is he at now—working on the square or on the cross?"

"On the square, I believe," said the first. "Leastways, I saw him walking with Mr. Calverley in the City the other day, and he would not have been in such respectable company if he had not been all right."

"I suppose not," said the other man, "for the time being; but Tom Durham is a shaky kind of customer anyways."

CHAPTER II. EXIT TOM DURHAM.

MR. DURHAM remained watching the departing train until it had passed out of sight, when he turned round and walked quietly out of the station. The emotion he had shown, and which to his great astonishment he had really felt, had vanished, and left him in a deeply contemplative state. He pushed his arms half-way up to his elbows in his pockets, and muttered to himself as he strode along the street; but it was not until he found himself in the sitting-room at Radley's Hotel, and had made himself a stiff glass of brandy-and-water from the bottle, duly included in the bill which Alice had paid, that he gave his feelings much vent. Then loading a short, black pipe from a capacious tobacco-pouch, he seated himself at the table, and as he went through his various papers and memoranda thought aloud.

"This is a rum start, and no mistake! Twenty years ago, when I left this very same place, a 'prentice on board the old Gloucestershire, I never thought I should have the luck to stay in this swell hotel, and better still, not to have to put my hand in my own pocket to pay the bill. It is luck, no doubt, a large slice of luck, larded with talent and peppered with experience. That's the sort of meal for a man that wants to get on in the world, and that's just what I have got before me. Now, when I walk out of this hotel, I shall have two thousand pounds in my pocket. In my pocket!—not to be paid on my arrival at Ceylon, as the old gentleman at first insisted. Ally was of great assistance there. I wonder why she backed me so energetically? I suppose, because she thought it would have been infra dig. for her brother to appear in the eyes of those blessed natives, over whom he is to exercise superintendence, as though he had not been considered worthy of being trusted with the

money, and she was delighted with the notion of bringing it down here herself and handing it to me.

"If I hadn't touched the money until my arrival at Ceylon, I should have had to wait a pretty long time. You're a dear old gentleman, Mr. Claxton, and you mean well; but I don't quite see the fun of spending the rest of my days in looking after a lot of niggers under a sun that would dry the life-blood out of me before my time. There is an old saying, that every one must eat a peck of dirt in the course of their lives. Well, I ate mine early, took it down at one gulp, and I don't want any more of the same food. Besides, it is all very well for Ally to talk about gratitude and that kind of thing; but she does not know what I do, and it is entirely because I know what I do about my worthy brother-in-law, that I have been enabled to put the screw upon him, and to get out of him that very respectable bundle of banknotes. That was just like my luck again, to find that out, and be able to bring it home to him so pat; directly I first got on the scent, I knew there was money in it, and I followed it up until I placed it chuck-a-block before him, and he parted freely. In such a respectable way, too! None of your extortion; none of your threatening letters; none of your 'left till called for,' under initials, at the post-office; none of your hanging about London spending money which nobody can imagine how you get, and thereby starting suspicions of other matters which might not come out quite so nicely if looked into. 'Agent at Ceylon to the firm of Calverley and Company, brokers, Mincing-lane, London; iron smelters and boiler-makers, Swartmoor Foundry, Cumberland;' that's what Thomas D. will have engraved on his card when he gets there; and the two thousand pounds, as John gravely remarked before Alice, were for fitting up the office, and other necessary expenses. I wonder what that poor child thought the other necessary expenses could possibly be, to take such an amount of money?

"No, dear sir, thank you very much. I am willing to allow that the whole thing was done extremely well, and without causing the smallest suspicion in the mind of little Ally; but you paid me the money because you could not help it, and you will have to pay me a great deal more for that very same reason. You're a very great scoundrel, John Claxton, Esquire, a much greater scoundrel than I am, though I have taken your money, and have not the remotest intention of becoming your agent in Ceylon! You're a cold-blooded villain, sir, carrying out your own selfish ends, and not like myself, a generous creature, acting upon impulse. Notwithstanding the fact that I have your money in my pocket, I almost grudge you the satisfaction you will experience when, in the course of to-morrow or the next day, you will hear the news which will lead you to imagine that you are rid of me for ever; but I console myself with the reflection that when I turn up again, as I undoubtedly shall, your disgust will be proportionately intensified.

"There," as he selected two or three papers from a mass before him and carefully tore the rest into pieces, "there is the letter relating to the document which has already done so much for me, and which is to be my philosopher's stone. I must not run the chances of wetting and spoiling that paper when I take my midnight bath, so I shall hand it over to Mrs. D. when I give her the money to take care of. May as well put a seal on it though, for Mrs. D. is naturally curious, and as jealous as a female Othello. One o'clock; just the time I promised to meet her. Now then, the money in this pocket, the letter in that, and the other papers torn up, and the brandy-bottle emptied. What you may call a clean sweep of the whole concern."

After settling his hat to his satisfaction, and looking at himself in the glass with great complacency, Tom Durham strolled from the room, leaving the door wide open behind him. He nodded familiarly to a waiter whom he passed in the passage, but who, instead of returning the salutation, stared at him in wrathful wonder—they were unaccustomed to such gentry at Radley's—and then he passed into the street. Looking leisurely around him, he made his way back again to the promenade on which he had held his conversation with Alice Claxton, and there, standing by one of the cannon, was another woman, apparently awaiting his arrival. A woman of about thirty years of age, with swarthy complexion, bright beady black eyes, and dull blue-black hair. French, without doubt. French in the fashion of her inexpensive garments and the manner in which they were put on; undeniably French in her boots and gloves, in her gait, in the gesture and recognition which she made

when she saw Tom Durham approaching her. That estimable gentleman, apparently, was displeased at this gesture, for he frowned when he saw it, and when he arrived at the woman's side, he said, "Don't be so infernally demonstrative, Pauline, I have told you of that before."

"Mais, should I stand like a stone or stock when you come before me?" said the woman, with the slightest trace of a foreign accent. "I was longing to see you, and you came. Is it then astonishing——?"

"No, all right; don't jaw," said Tom Durham, shortly. "Only in our position it is not advisable to attract more notice than necessary—well, here you are!"

"Yes, I am here."

"All goes well; I told you there was an old gentleman—Claxton by name—connected with Calverley's firm, for which I'm supposed to be going out as agent, from whom I could get a sum of money, and I have got it—he sent it to me."

"Ah, ah, he sent it to you?"

"Yes, by—by a messenger whom he could trust; and this is not by any means the last that I shall have from him. He thinks I am off for the East, and that he is rid of me, but as soon as this sum is spent, he shall know the difference."

"You have made the arrangements about that?"

"I have arranged everything; I saw the pilot, he told me it was blowing hard outside, and that he shall pass the night off the Hurst. I have been on board and seen exactly how best to do what I intend, and now there is nothing left but to give you your instructions."

"Stay," said the woman, laying her hand on his breast, and looking earnestly into his face. "You are certain that you run no risk; you are certain that——"

"Take your hand away," he said; "you will never understand our English ways, Pauline; the people here cannot make out what you are about. I am all right, depend upon it. I could swim four times the distance in much rougher weather; and even if there were any danger, the prize is much too great to chance the loss of it for a little risk. Don't be afraid, Pauline," he added, with a little softening of his voice, "but clear that quick, clever brain of yours and attend to me. Here is the bundle of banknotes, and here is a letter which is almost as important; place them both securely in the bosom of your dress, and don't take them out for one instant until you hand them over to me to-morrow morning at Lymington station—you understand?"

"Perfectly," said the woman, taking the packets from him. "What time will you be there?"

"By half-past seven, when the first train passes. We can loaf away the day on the beach at Weymouth—we might go over to Portland, if you have any fancy to see the place; I have not; all in good time say I—and start for Guernsey by the midnight boat. Now is there anything more to say?"

"No," said Pauline—then suddenly, "Yes. Apropos of Portland, Wetherall and Moger were in this place, to-day. I saw them at the station, in the train going up to town. They put their heads out of the window to look after you."

"The devil!" cried Tom Durham; "they were down here, were they, and you saw them! Why, what on earth were you doing at the station?"

"I arrived here too soon, and walked up there to pass the time."

"Did you—did you see any one else?" asked Tom Durham, looking fixedly at her.

"Any one else?—plenty, porters, passengers, what not; but of people that I knew, not a soul," answered the woman, raising her eyes and meeting his gaze with perfect calmness.

"That's all right," he muttered; then louder, "Now it's time for me to go on board. Good-bye, Pauline, make your way to Lymington, and look out for me at the station at seven-thirty to-morrow morning."

As she stood looking after him, a hard, defiant expression came over the woman's face. "Did I see any one else," she said, between her set teeth; "yes, mon cher, I saw the pale, white-faced doll whom you held in your arms and kissed at parting, and who fell back into the carriage and cried like a baby, as she is. This was then the secret of your refusing to go to India with the money of this old fool whom you have robbed! Or rather whom she has robbed, for she was the messenger who brought it to you, and it is doubtless she who has beguiled this dotard out of the bank-notes which she handed over to you, her lover! Peste! If that slavish love I have for you were not mixed with the dread and terror which I have learnt from experience, I would escape with this money to my own land, and leave you and your mignonne to make it out as best you might; but I am weak enough to love you still, and my re-

venge on her must wait for a more fitting opportunity."

Her passion spent, Pauline gathered her shawl tightly round her and walked away towards the town.

On board the steam-ship Massilia matters had happened pretty much as Tom Durham had predicated. That capital sample of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's fleet worked out of harbour, at half-past two, and, in charge of a pilot, made her way slowly and steadily down Southampton Water. The wind freshened, and darkness coming on, the captain decided on anchoring off Hurst Castle for the night, and proceeding on his voyage at daylight. This decision was greatly to the delight of the passengers, who had not yet shaken down into that pleasant companionship which such a voyage frequently brings about, and who, restless and strange in their unaccustomed position, were glad to seek their berths at a very early hour. During the afternoon's run Tom Durham had succeeded in creating for himself a vast amount of popularity. He chatted with the captain about nautical matters, of which he had obtained a smattering when he was apprentice on board the old East Indiaman; he talked to the lady passengers, deprecating their dread of sea-sickness, and paying them pleasant attention, while he smoked with the gentlemen, and took care to let them all know the important position which he occupied, as the agent of Calverley and Company. Never was there so agreeable a man.

At about one in the morning, when perfect quiet reigned throughout the ship, the passengers being asleep in their berths, the men, save those on duty, sound in the forecastle, and the echo of the watch-officer's footsteps dying away in the distance, Tom Durham suddenly appeared at the head of the saloon companion, and made his way swiftly towards the middle of the ship. He was dressed as in the morning, save that he wore no coat, and on his feet instead of boots he had thin light slippers. When he arrived opposite the huge half-circle of the paddle-box he stopped, and groping with his hands speedily found an iron ring, seizing which he pulled open a door, which revolved on its hinges, disclosing a wooden panel, which he slid back, and stepping through the aperture found himself standing on one of the broad paddles of the enormous wheel. In an instant he had pulled the first door back to its previous position, and stepping lightly from paddle to paddle stood on the nethermost one just above the surface of the water. He paused for a moment, bending down and peering out into the darkness, then raising his hands high up above his head and clasping them together, he dived down into the water, scarcely making a splash.

Ten minutes afterwards, one of the two men who are always on duty in the little telegraph hut under Hurst Castle, opened the door, and accompanied by a big black retriever, who was growling angrily, walked out into the night. When he returned, his companion hailed him from the little bedroom overhead.

"What's the matter, Needham—what's the dog growling about?"

"I thought I heard a cry," said the man addressed; "Nep must have thought so too, by the way he's going on, but I can see nothing. When I was out a few minutes ago I thought I saw something like a dog swimming near the Massilia, lying at anchor there, but it isn't there now. I doubt after all it may have been my fancy."

"I wish you would keep your fancy to yourself, and not let it rouse me up," growled his mate. "One don't get too much rest in this blessed place at the best of times."

THE ATMOSPHERE.

"FAT did 'e o' ?" is not a question asked in any foreign language, being frequently heard in Aberdeenshire. Interpreted, it means "What died he of?" The humorous answer is often, "Want of breath." It assumes that if the patient could only breathe, he would continue to live; breath, the inhalation of atmospheric air, being the sine quâ non of vitality. Can it then be called a waste of time to bestow a few minutes on the atmosphere? For in it we may truly say, we live, move, and have our being.

The first series of ALL THE YEAR ROUND contains an article on Air.* But air, simply considered as such, in spite of its marvellous properties, no more gives us an adequate idea of an atmosphere than a brick does of a house, a hewn stone of a royal palace, or a marine aquarium of the

*See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, First Series, vol. xii. pp. 399 and 422.

German Ocean. Air supplies the mass, the material, the body, the framework of the atmosphere; but the atmosphere is full of matters, agencies, and forces, whose only connexion with air is that of being mixed up with and working in it.

The atmosphere is an aërial sea whose surface we are utterly unable to reach. We—men and beasts, insects and creeping things—are air-respiring fish, living in the very depths of that sea. The majority of birds are flying-fish, some of which soar to considerable heights without suffering from a medium so attenuated as to be the death of cats and the destruction of monkeys. Despise we not our fellow-fish of the seas and rivers because they inhale a denser and a less elastic fluid.

We ourselves are only organised atmosphere, just as jelly-fish are organised water. We are walking omelettes-soufflées, stalking syllabubs, vivacious whipped-creams. We may bear to be called "wind-bags" without offence. Take the tallest giant; expel from his person all the air and water it contains, and you may put him into a very small compass and carry him about with you without great fatigue. Add to this, that the little solid matter we have in us is perpetually changing; that we are actually resuscitated dead men, made of the dust of our predecessors, whether plant, animal, or human being (for all the atoms which form our organic tissues have already served their turn in other organic tissues); that every molecule now incorporated in our frame will soon return to the atmosphere and the earth, to form part, by-and-bye, of other frames; and verily the poet well might say, "We are such stuff as dreams are made of." If, then, the material portion of our individual selves is so slight and fleeting, it demonstrates not merely the existence, but the preponderating influence, of the immaterial portion—of our enduring and permanent self-consciousness, our life-long memory, our intellect, our affections, our calculations and forecasts of future events.

It sometimes occurs to our musing fancy to pity the fish which inhabit brooks and ponds, on account of the narrowness of the prison in which they are confined. The rivulet's bed, its banks, and surface, constitute their cell, their den. Beyond it, they are fish out of water, physically unable to take their walks abroad. But the atmosphere is to us what the watercourse is to the fish, a most provoking barrier to unlimited excursions. It is a string tied to our leg, under pain of suffocation if we break our tether. It is a tourist's circular railway ticket, permitting us to visit cities on plains and at certain altitudes above them, but excluding not merely such inviting places as the moon, but rendering the tops of the Himalayas and of the Andes accessible only by special trains and privileged visitors. What a nice book, with maps and coloured illustrations, would be Six Months in the Moon! What a handsome price "the trade" would give for the copyright. And the niggardly atmosphere, or the want of it, prevents our doing the work, supposing other obstacles surmountable.

Were even a tight-rope stretched to the moon, Blondin himself could not reach it with a failing atmosphere. We can conceive a new species of man with lungs contrived for the storage of air, in order to traverse airless spaces, as the camel takes in a cargo of water to enable it to cross the desert; but on reaching the moon, the want of an atmosphere would render that modification useless. As man cannot fly at present, he must be content with walking and riding; but we could pardon intellectual and literary birds for complaining that flying is too limited a faculty, as well as that breathing is too necessary a function; because both confine their migrations and wanderings within the shallow limits of our atmosphere.

To console us, we have some few small compensations. It is doubtful whether our sweethearts' cheeks would be so rosy, and their eyes so bright, if living in a rarer medium, say the ether. Beautiful are Italian summer skies; nevertheless, we are thankful when the atmosphere holds over us the parasol of a passing cloud. Bright are British frosty mornings; still, on returning from our walk, we are glad that the atmosphere should have nourished the plants, which collected the carbon, which made the coal, which stores the sunbeams, which are given back from our grates when the sun being absent, we light our fires. Our walk gives an appetite; we sit down to dine; which reminds us that, if there were no atmosphere, there would be no dinner. The chops and the steaks come from oxen and sheep, which feed on grass; which feeds, through its roots, on gravel, sand, and mould, made by the atmosphere, and, by its leaves, on rains, dews, and carbonic acid gas, brought by the atmosphere. All bread, as well as all flesh, is grass, sprung from the same at-

mospheric origin. "And fish?" you ask. Fish cannot live in airless water. Put your aquarium under an air-pump, and try how long its tenants will survive. Besides, water, the so-called "clement" of fish, is supplied by the showers which, without an atmosphere, would be impossible.

Our earth is not the only heavenly body gifted with an atmosphere, although the instance of our nearest neighbour and follower, the moon, might make us suspect the contrary. Some of the little telescopic planets which have been found between Mars and Jupiter seem to have more than their share of this gaseous life-giving envelope, and to offer an even more comfortable residence than the earth to plants, beasts, birds, and biped beings who might ask us, "Am I not a man and a brother?" Juno possesses a largely developed atmosphere. Ceres has one still more considerable, estimated at four hundred and eighty miles in depth. While Pallas has an atmosphere so absurdly overgrown, as to make the planet itself look like a rushlight in a fog, or an owl in an ivy-bush. No planet in our system has anything like it. The thickness of every-day and ordinary atmospheres is only a trifling fraction of a planet's radius; Pallas's is some fifteen times as thick as her radius is long. It is an anomaly, a monstrosity in the solar system, being valued by Schroeter at six hundred and ninety miles deep. What a field for butterflies, birds, and ballooners!

Besides their atmospheric resources, there is another convenience which renders these little planets (with the exception of Vesta) desirable homes for emigrants. The fall of heavy bodies on their surface (and on Pallas's especially) is so gentle and slow, that a man could easily jump from a height of sixty feet, with no severer shock on falling than if he jumped a yard on earth. Conceive the development thus attainable by the ballet. What capers might be cut before coming to the ground! Suicide by throwing oneself from the top of a monument would be simply an impossibility. The most careless nursemaids would get no scoldings when their dear little charges fell out of window. Philosophers say the Palladians are probably giants, and that animals as big as whales take their walks on dry ground. A small world, however, it is for such portly inhabitants, its whole surface being something less than the tithe of that of the United Kingdom. It takes us three years to sail round our globe; it would take us ten days to sail round Pallas. Tourists must soon exhaust their world, and long to escape to something new.

It was paying Beelzebub too high a compliment to entitle him the Prince of Air. It is not in that domain that the worst mischief is brewed. Storms are only the spasms and efforts which accompany all work, however beneficent. Winds are the circulation, the pulse of the atmosphere, which sometimes, as in typhoons and hurricanes, beat and rush with feverish rapidity; but the whole terrestrial body corporate is thereby invigorated and kept alive. Truer princes of the air are men who have recently extorted its secrets and sounded its depths, or heights, often at the peril of their lives. Such are our intrepid countryman, Glaisher, and Camille Flammarion, whose full, rich, and heavy volume* now lies before us. Unlike the subject of which it treats, it is a solid and substantial affair, a real standing dish, or pièce de resistance, to cut and come again, consisting of eight hundred and twenty-four pages, fifteen chromolithographs, and two hundred and twenty-eight wood engravings, weighing five pounds avoirdupois in its simple cover, and costing twenty francs, or three and fourpence a pound—which is no reason why it should not be worth its weight in gold. Those men, namely Glaisher and Flammarion, are truly princes of the air, with nothing whatever satanic about them. They have ridden on the storm, and soared above the thunder, desiring only to tell us what they know about our enveloping aërial ocean.

How deep are we buried in air? The question has long been one of the vexed. Thirty miles, says Biot, is the minimum depth. At that distance from the earth's surface, the atmosphere ought to be as rare as the vacuum in our air-pumps, which we know is only an approach to a vacuum. Observation shows that there must be some sort of atmosphere considerably higher, and the last new notion is that, on the top of the terrestrial atmosphere in which we live, there floats, like cream on milk, another much lighter and etherised atmosphere. In this region occur the phenomena—shooting stars, aurorœ boreales, and the freaks of reflected and refracted light—which are still such puzzles, as seen from our lowly place of observation.

The upper atmosphere should be stable;

* L'Atmosphère, Description des Grands Phénomènes de la Nature, par Camille Flammarion. Paris: Hachette et Cie.

the lower one unstable and ceaselessly agitated. Its movements, caused by winds and tempests, would vary in height according to the seasons. In our own neighbourhood the troubled portion overlying the earth would be eight or ten miles high in winter, and about twice as high in summer. The upper atmosphere would experience only a very slight and scarcely sensible disturbance, arising from the heaving of the denser aërial surface on which it rests. Into this calm stratum floating overhead, neither living creatures nor even clouds obtain access.

We can readily conceive that, above our atmosphere of oxygen, azote, and watery vapour, there exists another excessively light atmosphere, perhaps a couple of hundred miles thick, composed of the very lightest gases, especially of hydrogen. This is rendered more probable by the composition of air, which differs essentially from that of water. Water consists of two gases chemically combined, and, when once combined, extremely difficult to separate; whereas air is only a mixture of gases no more combined than oil, water, and quicksilver stirred together in a pot. Happily for us, winds and tempests keep stirring these elements; but where they can find a place of rest, they are perfectly at liberty to part company.

Where is the bottom of the atmosphere? Not the earth's surface, for air penetrates earth's porous substance, as well as everything upon it. We ourselves, it has been stated, are full of air. We are all of us proud frogs puffed up with wind, which helps us to resist the pressure of wind without. Air insinuates itself amongst the molecules of liquids, as well as through the interstices of rocks. Not merely plants and all organised creatures, but water itself admits the ingress of air. In some important cases, the ingredients of air thus infiltrated are slightly altered in quantity. Was it, for instance, by creative design, or by mere chance that in air absorbed by the teeming ocean, the proportion of oxygen is greater than in ordinary air, thus enabling the sea to sustain its increased myriads of living beings?

The ocean is probably considerably older, as well as much more unchanging in its composition, than the atmosphere. We must seek for the latter's origin in the period when the globe, still molten and liquid, began to be covered with a thin solid crust, giving off from its surface inconceivable quantities of gases and vapours, which fought, or shook hands together, after their kind. In the midst of this gigantic laboratory oxygen and hydrogen combined, and there was water. Air, at present principally a mixture of oxygen and azote, must have undergone considerable changes before arriving at its actual condition. We may fairly surmise that it once contained both more carbonic acid and more oxygen, the former being solidified as coal, timber, and vegetable tissue, the latter combined with metallic bases, as we now see it producing rust in iron.

Of the ingredients still existing in the atmosphere, carbonic acid is perhaps the most curious. Oxygen and azote are both permanent gases; that is, they successfully defy us to make them anything else but gases. But under great pressure, assisted by a very low temperature, carbonic acid can be liquefied, and even solidified. It then looks like light and very compressible snow, so intensely cold as to burn the skin by its contact. The quantity in which it exists in the air (as a general rule exceedingly slight) varies according to times and places. In minimum doses, it does no harm, and is even said to have a calming effect; but in larger proportions it is injurious, and, if increased, causes death by suffocation.

In volcanic regions, springs and wells of carbonic acid gas are not unfrequent, forming part of the geological formation, like the springs and wells of petroleum in certain districts of North America. The Dogs' Grotto, near Naples, enjoys a world-wide reputation for evil. It displays the fact that carbonic acid gas is so much heavier than air, that it lies on the ground like a pool of water. The gas flows out over the threshold of the door, and runs like a brook down the path leading up to the grotto. In calm weather, a lighted candle plunged into the stream near its point of exit, is immediately extinguished.

While M. Boussingault was exploring, in 1831, the equatorial craters of South America, he was taken to a spot where animals cannot remain with impunity, namely, Tunguravilla, at a short distance from the volcano Tungurua. "Our horses," he says in his narrative, "gave us unmistakable notice that we were approaching it, by refusing to obey the spur, and jerking their heads in a way most unpleasant to the rider. The earth was strewn with dead birds; one of them, a magnificent cock-of-the-woods (?), was eagerly picked up by our guides. Amongst the victims were

several reptiles and a multitude of butterflies. The sport was abundant and the game not too high. An old Indian, Quichua, who accompanied us, said that when you want to sleep long and peaceably, you ought to make your bed on the Tungura-villa."

Nearer home, two springs of carbonic acid are so abundant as to give rise to accidents in the open fields. One is on the banks of Lake Laacher, by the Rhine, the other not far from Aigueperse, in Auvergne. The gas rises from slight hollows in the ground, around whose brink vegetation is luxuriant, in which insects and small animals run to cover and are suffocated. Their bodies attract birds, which perish in like manner. Then come the shepherds, who, aware of the danger, secure the game with long hooked sticks, and make heavy bags without expending powder or shot.

In the Middle Ages, the effects of this gas in cellars, mines, wells, and grottos, set people's imaginations to work. Such spots were guarded by dragons, demons, gnomes, genii, keeping watch over hidden treasures, and inflicting death on the presumptuous intruder by the mere glance of their terrible eyes. To what other cause could such deaths be attributed? For the sufferers invariably bore no wound, bruise, discoloration, or other trace of violence.

As to balloon and mountain ascents; halos, mock suns, celestial circles, spectres; clouds, their classification, forms and properties; monstrous hailstones, their formation and effects; showers of blood, earth, sulphur, fish, frogs, and crosses; gallegos, harmattans, khamsins, tebbads; thunder and lightning, with diverse and sundry of their acts and deeds, besides countless other grand phenomena of Nature, are they not ably written at length in that voluminous book, Flammarion's Atmosphere?

ALPHABETICAL LIBERTIES.

Some writers have amused themselves by showing that they could either dispense with this or that letter of the alphabet, or could select one letter as a special favourite. Even the best poets have found that they can occasionally increase the force or grace of their lines by the repetition of a particular letter. If this is clumsily done, it becomes distasteful to the eye of the reader and the ear of the listener, and is denounced as alliterative; but in good hands the deformity becomes a beauty. Pope enunciated this truth in a line which is itself alliterative. "Apt alliteration's artful aid." Alliteration strengthens Shakespeare's line, "Had my sweet Harry had but half their number;" and Milton's "Behemoth biggest born of earth;" and Dryden's "God never made his work for man to mend;" and Quarles's "Light that lives by love and loves by light." Humorists have, of course, not refrained from making use of alliteration in their own way; as in "We pry, we prowl, we progress, and we prog from pole to pole."

Many oddities are constructed on the plan of the well known children's lines, "Peter Piper pick'd a peck of pepper," "Lazy Lawrence lost his lass and lobster," &c. One of the courtiers of James the First addressed to the monarch twenty-six sonnets, the first of which began with A, the second with B, and so on, throughout the alphabet. The construction is more definite, however, and certainly more difficult to manage, where every word begins with the same letter—as in a humorous trifle beginning "Pugna pugnorum," where every word begins with "p." Perhaps the most notable example extant is a Latin poem written by Christianus Pierius, called "Christus Crucifixus," and said to consist of a thousand lines. Every word begins with the letter C. The words roll on sonorously, "Consilebratulæ cunctorum carmine certum," &c. It must have been a work of immense labour to construct—whether worth the doing, we must judge for ourselves. In a language containing many small words, such as pronouns, prepositions, and conjunctions, the difficulty would be still greater; as any one would see on trying it in English. Within smaller limits, inscriptions and mottoes in Latin make much use of this mode of treatment—as in the inscription on the monument of one of the kings of Poland, "Principi Patri Patriæ Pietas Publicus Posuit."

On the other hand, some men have plumed themselves on their power of dispensing with any alphabetical letter at their pleasure. One Tryphiodorus, a Greek poet, is said to have written a poem in which the first part or book had no letter "a," the second no letter "b," and so on. Pindar wrote an ode without an "s." Fulgentius composed a Latin poem, comprising as many chapters as there are letters in the alphabet; each chapter dispensing with one particular letter, and all the letters

being thus omitted in turn. Lope de Vega, the prolific writer of Spanish novels and dramas, composed five stories, in the first of which there was no vowel "a," in the second no vowel "e," and so on with the other three vowels. Gregorio Kêti wrote a discourse in which the letter "r" never occurred.

English rhymesters have tried their skill in both these forms; but our language does not lend itself readily to such things. Sometimes one vowel is resolutely used throughout; but the good specimens are few. There are many about equal in demerit to "This Dick is high in his mind; is this instinct?" in which no vowel except "i" is used. A far better is "Persevere ye perfect men, ever keep the precepts ten," in which "e" is the favoured vowel. A jeu d'esprit, which has exercised many minds, is a Latin description of rope-making or twine-making, in which every word begins with the letter "c." A French version, not pretending to go so far as this, contrives to use the syllable "cord" as frequently, and in as many different ways, as possible:

Quand un cordier cordant
Veut corder une corde,
Trois cordons accordant
A sa corde il accorde.

Si l'un des trois cordons
De la corde décorde,
Le cordon decordant
Fait décorder la corde.

Doctor Wallis put it into English in the following form:

When a twister a twisting will twist him a twist,
For the twisting his twist he three twines doth intwist;
But if one of the twines of his twist do untwist,
The twine that untwisteth untwisteth the twist.

By adding the words twisting, two, twice, 'twixt, and twain, a couple of extra stanzas were composed:

Untwisting the twine that untwisteth between,
He twists with his twister the two in a twine;
Then twice having twisted the twines of the twain,
He twisteth the twines he had twisted in vain.

The twain that, in twisting before in the twine,
As twines were intwisted, he now doth untwine,
'Twixt the twain intertwisting a twine more between,
He twisting his twister makes twist of the twine.

There is one kind of alliteration which produces a peculiar effect if well managed—beginning every line (after the first) with the same word as that which ends the line immediately preceding; there is an old French poem constructed in this form. Another, much more difficult to compose, is the reciprocal verse, in which each line reads exactly the same whether read forwards or backwards. Here is one:

Signa te signa temere me tangis et angis.

The first and last letters are "s," the first but one and the last but one are "i," and so on. The way in which the letters group themselves into words is very curious, still preserving the reciprocation so far as concerns the letters themselves. Here is another, by one of the old Latin writers:

Roma tibi subito motibus ibit amor.

In English this is excessively difficult. Gascoigne, who tried hard at it, could contrive no better reciprocal line than one rather unpleasant to read:

Lewd did I live, Evil I did dwel.

The whole line is reciprocal, and so is each half of it; if "dwel" were spelt in the modern form "dwell," the reciprocity would fail.

The exclusive use of one letter as an initial, and the resolute disuse of one letter, are alike difficult, as the reader will have perceived in many of the above examples. A more facile and more frequent pleasantry is the use of the whole alphabet in some peculiar form. It is known that one particular verse in the ordinary English version of the Bible (Ezra, chap. vii., v. 21) contains all the letters in the alphabet. Possibly there are other verses, sacred and secular, of which the same may be said. But the difficulty would be to construct a line which should contain the whole alphabet, each letter used only once. The late Professor De Morgan, who had a remarkable tact in relieving the severity of mathematical studies by composing ingenious puzzles, tried to make a line, with some sort of intelligible collocation of words, on this principle. He endeavoured to use all the twenty-six letters of the English alphabet, but could make nothing of it; he then made use of the poetical license of employing "u" for "v," and "i" for "j." The ludricous result came out as follows:

I, quartz pyx, who fling muck beds.

The professor's line encouraged enigmatists to try something better. One ran thus:

Quiz my black whigs; export fund.

Whether this is better nonsense than De Morgan's may be doubted. Another was:

Dumpy Quiz, whirl back fogs next;

like the two former in having a duplication of "u" to serve for "u" and "v," and of "i" to serve for "i" and "j." De Morgan, in communicating these oddities to Notes and Queries, decided that the nearest approach to good sense was made in the following, constructed just on the same plan as the others:

Get nymph; quiz sad brow; fix luck.

A favourite bit of sing-song, on the plan of the children's "A is an apple," "B is a ball," &c., has sometimes been tried in rather ambitious ways. There must be twenty-six lines, the initial letters of which follow the due alphabetical order. Letter "x" is generally a poser, only to be got over with some difficulty. There is a theological alphabet in Latin, published at Rome, in which a colloquy takes place between a teacher and a pupil on religious subjects. The successive lines begin with Anima, Beatitudo, Cœlum, Deus, Eternus, Fides, Gratia, Humilitas, Justitia, &c.; but the author has departed a little from Latinity in using Karitas and Yesus, probably puzzled how to bring in these two initials in any other way.

Early in the present century there was a theatrical alphabet, in which the actors of the day were hit off with more or less of satire, as in the lines:

B was a Baker as stiff as a post;
C was a Conway, 'tis known he can rant well;
D was a Dowton, oh, rare Doctor Cantwell;

and so on. About 1830 there appeared in a small periodical what purported to be the title of a sort of book of anecdotes and jokes, characterised as "Alphabetical Assertions Briefly Collected; Describing Elegant Flirtations, Generally Happening in Joking, Kissing, Larking, Merry Making, Nutting (Opportunity Producing Queer Rumpusses), Small Talk Under Volk's Windows, 'Xciting Youthful Zeal." In more pretentious alphabets of this kind, there may be found similarly crooked ways of concocting an initial X. A medical student, whose fund of humour stood him in good part, got up a sort of pharmaceutical alphabet in this style:

A was an alkali, potash by name;
B was a blowpipe for fusing the same, &c.

Either in another, or a modified version of the same alphabet, chemistry, pharmacy, anatomy, and surgery were all brought into requisition, as in the lines:

C were some chemicals, lithium and borax;
D was a diaphragm flooring the thorax;
M was a muscle, cold, flabby, and red;
N was a nerve like a bit of white thread;
O was some opium a fool chose to take;
And P were the pins used to keep him awake.

In the time of the Crimean war an alphabet was constructed in which the first eight lines began with the first eight letters in proper order, initials of the words Aberdeen, Bear, Czar, Defiance, Emperor, Frenchmen, Greeks, Hospodar—of course taking the side of the allies. Then followed six more letters; and then

O was our Own Correspondent so trusty;
P was a Port [e] old and thin, and turned crusty,

and so on down to

Y was a yell for the friends of the czar;
Z were the zanies who're frighten'd at war.

One of the forms given to these queer effusions is to have a common rhyme for all the twenty-six lines—a task involving a little dictionary work. There is one in which this common rhyme is represented by trees, bees, wheeze, fees, tease, squeeze, keys, knees, &c. Another, made out with a few abbreviations and also a few slang words, makes use of the rhyme lamb, slam, telegram, Sam, yam, sham, flam, ham, dam, ram, cram, &c.; and another that of bat, hat, flat, sprat, plait, rat, vat, mat, sat, &c. In

A was an army to settle disputes,

there are only twenty-four lines, the author having apparently been puzzled how to deal with the remaining two; it travels on to

Z is the Zuyder Zee dwelt in by coots.

There is no particular connexion between the sense of the different lines; and this is certainly a defect; but there is an odd medley of rhymes furnished by the words disputes, brutes, Coutts, lutes, salutes, mutes, boots, roots, institutes, shoots, fruits, Bute's, flutes, hoots, newts, suits, refutes, recruits, cheroots, imputes, émeutes, suits, coots—useful in one sense in illustrating the varieties of ending which have the same sound in this English language of ours. One alphabet, better than this in having some sort of story to tell, is a list of twenty-six damsels, assigning a characteristic to each, and giving a common rhyme to the ending of all the lines. The damsels are Amy, Betty, Charlotte, Diana, Ellen, Fanny, Griselda, Helen, Ida, &c.; and the lines end with such words as waist, replaced, paste, traced, embraced, defaced, strait-laced, oval-faced, graced, waste, chaste.

The cleverest of all the group, perhaps, is that in which all the words in the first line begin with A, all those in the second line with B, and so on. One, a comical affair, opens thus:

Arthur asks Amy's affection;
Bet, being Benjamin's bride,
Coolly cut Charley's connexion,

down to

Soft Simon's sympathy scribbles
Tales to tall Tabitha Twist,

and a few words to finish the alphabet.

The Siege of Belgrade, at one time (though we know not on what authority) ascribed to Canning, flows on with an un-

usual degree of spirit and sonorousness. Battle and tumult breathe in every phrase. The following are eleven lines out of the twenty-four or twenty-six:

An Austrian army awfully array'd,
Boldly by batteries besieged Belgrade;
Cossack commanders cannonading come,
Dealing destruction's devastating doom.
Ev'ry endeavour engineers essay,
For fame, for fortune—fighting, furious fray.

. . . . . .

Men march 'mid mounds, 'mid moles, 'mid murd'rous mines.

. . . . . .

Poor patients, partly pinched, partly pressed,
Quite quaking, quickly quarter quest.
Reason returns, religious right redounds,
Suwarrow stops such sanguinary sounds.

DREAMING AND AWAKING.

If I had lain thee low in the mould,
With the sods on thy fair frank face,
And prayed my prayer, and made my moan,
And turned to my desolate hearth alone,
To stare at thy vacant place:

Why I had mourned the long hours through,
With a sorrow that would not die;
Yet thinking, my love and I at last,
When the fret and the fever of life are past,
May meet in our home on high.

If I had seen thee turn away,
From this passionate love of mine,
To woo another, for troth and faith,
To give another, for life and death,
True hand and name of thine:

Why I had felt, though not for me,
To win that noble heart,
I may watch his steadfast course afar,
I may joy in the light of my one proud star,
As I sit in the shade apart.

But to know our trust was baseless,
To know our hope was vain.
Ah, who that wakens from visioned bliss,
To truth, cold, bitter, and hard as this,
Would venture to dream again.

PUNCH AND THE PUPPETS.

Of the once numerous race of puppets, Punch is by far the best known in England at the present time. He, in fact, alone of all the puppets which once used to amuse English audiences, retains his hold on the popular favour. Every one who has lived in a large town must be tolerably familiar with the shrill squeak and absurd appearance of the performers going through their various parts in a comedy, which, when considered from a moral point of view, is contrary to all our previously received ideas. A writer in this very publication,* speaking of those who stop and thoughtlessly look for a few minutes at the performance of Punch, observes: "And then they walk away to keep important appointments, and to transact important business, little reflecting that they have witnessed one of the most awful tragedies ever offered to the contemplation of mankind. They have, in fact, seen represented a series of murders, all perpetrated by brutal means, that would raise the horror of civilised Europe if brought before the notice of a legal tribunal, and all accompanied by reckless derision on the part of the murderer, an uncouth being, whose form and voice seem to separate him from the rest of mankind."

Without adopting the ironical criticism of this writer, it must be admitted that its morality is not the highest recommendation of Mr. Punch's comedy.

It is a curious and interesting question whence can have originated this odd little drama. Probably of the thousands who have looked on while it was being performed, very few, indeed, have been at all curious as to when and whence it arose, but have contented themselves with the vague general impression that it is the Italian Pulcinella in an English dress; if, indeed, they troubled their heads at all about the matter.

Two theories only as to the origin of Punch appear to have any tinge of probability. The one is that the idea of Punch first originated in the mind of an ingenious Italian in the city of Acerra, near Naples, about the beginning of the seventeenth century. Three Italian authors, Riccoboni, Giunna, and Segniorelli, state this, and Giunna is so precise as to give the name of the ingenious inventor. He says: "Silvio Fiorelli, comedian, invented the Neapolitan Pulcinella, to which Andrea Calcese, by study and natural grace, added much." Mr. Payne Collier, in his work entitled Punch and Judy, has adopted this account as the most probable, though even he admits that it is open to doubt whether Punch is not one of a family of far greater antiquity. The other theory as to the origin of the English Punch is that which Doctor Johnson was accustomed to support, namely, that he is not the invention of any particular man or time, but the amalgamation of several characters, which were all well-known in the puppet-plays of the Middle Ages, more especially of that one called the Vice or Iniquity of the morality plays, which took the place of the miracle plays of an earlier epoch.

But, in truth, puppet-plays, or plays by "motions," as they were called, were so common all over civilised Europe, and came into existence at so extremely early a date, that it seems far more probable that the small drama we are considering grew or was developed out of others that had preceded it, than that it should have been

* See All the Year Round, First Series, vol. i. p. 200.

definitely invented by some person at a particular time. And this appears the more probable when we consider that one character at least in the old puppet-shows had a part to play, containing some of the very same incidents which are now thought to be the characteristics of our friend and favourite Punch.

Thus the Vice of the miracle and morality plays always ended his wicked career in a combat with the Devil, by whom he was ultimately carried off. Now, although Punch, on the other hand, succeeds in vanquishing his satanic majesty, yet this novelty of reversing the parts of these two performers had crept into the morality plays before the earliest date to which the birth of Punch can be assigned. For the birth of Punch in Italy has never been fixed at an earlier period than the beginning of the seventeenth century, and Giunna and Segniorelli put it rather later. But Ben Jonson, writing in 1616, says, in his play of The Devil is an Ass, that formerly the Devil was accustomed to carry off the Vice, but to-day their parts are changed, and it is the Vice who carries off the Devil; and, says the learned and painstaking author of the Histoire des Marionnettes in the Revue des deux Mondes (August, 1849), whose admirable series of articles forms the groundwork of this paper, this novelty pleased the public, and passed from the theatre of Blackfriars to the theatres of the marionettes, and Punch, when he arrived in England from Paris or Amsterdam, did not fail to appropriate to himself this part of the old Vice his predecessor.

That the change thus introduced was highly appreciated by the populace, we hear also on the evidence of Mr. Payne Collier, who tells us that a certain travelling puppet-showman having from religious scruples refused to allow the Devil to be killed by Punch, not only saw the hopes of his gains vanish, but was even assaulted and put to flight by the spectators.

This much at any rate is clear, that this particular feature of Punch's exploits is not peculiar to him, but was copied by him from puppet and other plays that were common in Europe before he was ever thought of.

Yet Punch, as the English representative puppet, has a high and ancient genealogy, which he would do ill to exchange for his alleged Italian origin. He and his troupe are in England almost the only surviving representatives of a race of small beings, whose birth dates beyond the times of the ancient Romans, and who for centuries enjoyed universal popularity. By assenting to the theory that would place his birth at Acerra in the seventeenth century, Punch would cut himself off from an illustrious ancestry, whose exploits are to be found recorded in the pages of Plato, Aristotle, Horace, Petronius, Galen, Apuleius, Tertullian, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Ben Jonson, Molière, Pope, Swift, Fielding, Voltaire, Goethe, and Byron. Yes, the pages of all these great authors contain some reference to puppet-plays and players, who are the direct ancestors of Mr. Punch.

Nay, it would almost appear as if the Romans had some conception of that illustrious personage himself, for in the year 1727 a bronze statue of a Roman mime called Maccus was discovered, which is said to have borne the well-known physical characteristics of Punch. This statue, says Mr. D'Israeli, in his Curiosities of Literature, is engraved in a work on the Roman comic stage by an Italian named Ficoroni. If this be so, the discovery of this statue seems to confirm the theory that our friend Punch is not the creation of one mind, but the embodiment of several characters which formed part of the dramatis personæ of the real and the puppet stage from a very early period.

It is no figure of speech to say a very early period, for the practice of representing scenes and incidents dramatically by means of puppets is of extreme antiquity.

Herodotus, in the hundred and forty-eighth chapter of his second book, states that the Egyptians, in their ceremonial of the worship of Osiris, used to carry about small Phallic images, or puppets, the limbs of which were moved by strings. The same performance, the pseudo-Lucian tells us, took place at Heliopolis.

Again, we are told that automaton images were common at the festivals of Bacchus, who is the same as Osiris, for Calixenes, in his work, the Banquet of Athenæus, tells us that on one occasion when Ptolemy Philadelphus held a festival in honour of Bacchus, a statue of that deity was carried about, which raised itself at its own will, poured out a libation of milk, and sat down again.

A very celebrated group of automaton images at Prœneste is mentioned by Cicero, in his book De Divinatione. It consisted of Jupiter, Juno, and their children, seated on the knees of Fortune, and they appeared to move of their own will.

The knowledge of the contrivances by

which these little beings were made to appear to move at their own will was at first entirely in the hands of the sacerdotal caste, who were the educated class; and, whilst this was so, automaton images and puppets were found at religious ceremonies alone. But when the science of mechanism and geometry was divulged, it became a means of ministering to the passion of the Greeks for plays and amusements; and two mathematicians, Archytas of Tarentum and Eudoxus, are said to have introduced automaton puppets into the popular recreations. Favorinus of Arles mentions one of the inventions of Archytas. It was a wooden dove, which used to fly, to the astonishment and amusement of the spectators.

But the greatest light has been thrown on the ancient puppet stage by the discovery of a whole shop or store of puppets under the ruins of the ancient city of Camarina. This collection is now at Catania, in the museum of the Prince of Biscari. One very remarkable puppet is mentioned by M. Muret, formerly one of the keepers of the Bibliothêque Nationale at Paris, and a drawing of it has been published by him. It was found at the ancient Panticapeum, the modern Kertch, in the Crimea, and was very ingeniously and skilfully contrived. The legs and arms were cleverly fitted into their places and articulated, motion was communicated by means of a thread which traversed a hole pierced in each thigh. These are merely individual puppets, and there is nothing to show that they formed part of any little theatre; but we are fortunately supplied with an account of a performance of puppets in ancient times by no less an authority than Xenophon.

That celebrated author tells us, in his account of the famous banquet of Callias, that amongst the amusements which that attentive host had prepared, was a Syracusan player of marionettes. There is abundant evidence to show that this taste for puppet-players spread universally in Greece and Rome, so that when the Greek stage began to fall from its original excellence, under the influence of the Macedonian faction, the Archons authorised a skilful puppet-maker, named Pothinus, to produce his wooden actors upon the stage of the theatre of Bacchus at Athens.

When Christianity became the religion of the world, the drama, both the real and that represented by marionettes, fell into disrepute. Naturally the early Christians looked with more than suspicion on an art that had been so closely allied, as this had been, with the false worship of the heathen deities, and centuries elapsed before the puppet race began again to lift their heads.

When, however, it came to be recognised that art and science might be used in the interest of religion, a great step had been taken in the direction of a point which was reached later, of admitting dramatic representations of religious subjects.

At first these representations were performed by religious confraternities, and later were transferred to the puppet stage. When they were thus transferred, it is not possible to determine very accurately, but Eustathius, who was Archbishop of Thessalonica in the twelfth century, in his commentary on the Iliad, when explaining the hundred and twenty-second verse of the fourth book, expresses his astonishment at the renown of the Greek neuropast Pothinus, but he at the same time states that the art was well known in the Greek empire.

Proof of the existence of the puppet drama in the West in the twelfth century was supplied by an exceedingly valuable manuscript in the library at Strasburg, which it is much feared must have perished in the German bombardment. It was called Ludus Monstrorum, and amongst them was a show of marionettes. In this same manuscript was a book by a celebrated abbess of Hohenberg, on moral and religious subjects; amongst the various matter is a gloss upon that verse of Ecclesiastes, "Vanity of vanities," &c., and the illumination by which it is illustrated is a representation of a little marionette man worked by a thread.

Between this epoch and the early part of the sixteenth century, puppet-plays seem to have gone into desuetude, but a certain Italian doctor of Pavia, Cardan by name, describes marionette plays with full details. He says: "If I wish to enumerate all the marvels that can be produced by means of threads on wooden statues, a whole day would not suffice me, for these little figures play, fight, hunt, dance, sound the trumpet, and cook very skilfully."

It has already been stated that the miracle plays which used to instruct and amuse the people in the Middle Ages were first performed by members of religious confraternities, who on Sundays and saints' days were accustomed, after morning service, to give representations of certain scenes of Scripture history. We are told that the denunciation of Nineveh, Jonah in the belly of the whale, and especially the Deluge,

with Noah in the Ark, were favourite subjects, and continued to hold their place even after the morality plays had been introduced.

These seem to have been added to the miracle plays about the middle of the fifteenth century. They received the name of morality plays, because the players took each the part of some virtue or vice, and carried out the part in a manner appropriate to that character.

By degrees, however, instead of representing each vice separately, the confraternities invented a character who should always appear, and who should be a sort of embodiment of all the sins. This personage got the name of the Vice and the Iniquity, and was always closely associated with the Devil. Shakespeare in Twelfth Night (Fourth Act, Second Scene), speaks of this personage as being then an old habitué of the morality plays. The clown in that play sings:

> I am gone, sir,
> And anon, sir,
> I'll be with you again,
> In a trice,
> Like to the old Vice,
> Your need to sustain:
> Who with dagger of lath,
> In his rage and his wrath,
> Cries, Ah, ah! to the devil.

Again, the reference in Hamlet shows that the author knew that he was making an allusion that would be understood by his audience. In the reproaches which Hamlet heaps upon his mother for her passion for his uncle, he thus describes him:

> HAM. A murtherer, and a villain:
> A slave, that is not twentieth part the tythe
> Of your precedent lord:—a vice of kings:
> A cutpurse of the empire and the rule;
> That from a shelf the precious diadem stole
> And put it in his pocket!

The subjects of these miracle and morality plays seem to have been represented by puppets certainly as early as the middle of the sixteenth century, for in King Lear (Second Act, Second Scene), Shakespeare makes an allusion which can only refer to the representation of morality plays on the puppet stage. The Earl of Kent thus addresses the servant of the undutiful Goneril, whom he has seized: "Draw, you rascal: you come with letters against the king, and take Vanity the puppet's part against the royalty of her father."

The Reformation under Henry the Eighth treated the puppet stage with consideration. Extravagant fanatics, such as the New Gospellers and extreme Puritans, cursed all amusements, but the churchmen took a more enlightened and liberal view of the matter, and an Irish bishop, John Bale, Bishop of Ossory, composed, and had represented by the pupils of the episcopal college at Kilkenny, a score of miracle and morality plays, inculcating Protestant principles.

Under Queen Mary of course Protestant plays gave way to Romanist, which were carried out with great pomp in London.

Queen Elizabeth was somewhat in a difficult position with regard to the stage. She was supported by the Puritan party, whilst her own views had nothing in common with puritanism, and she had no wish that her countenance of the drama should seem to favour either party. She therefore solved the difficulty, in a characteristic manner, by prohibiting performances of a religious kind altogether. The consequence of this prohibition of religious plays was that secular plays of a classical turn became very common in this reign.

In 1562, the stage, both great and small, fell under the ban of Calvin, who prohibited scenic representation with the utmost rigour. The effect was immense, says a French writer. All the Presbyterians of the three kingdoms, with whom the word of Calvin was more holy and sacred than the Gospel itself, raised a howl of reprobation against the theatre, which came, they said, from the ashes of paganism.

From this time, owing partly to civil and political difficulties, as well as to the Puritan influence, the drama declined, till it was finally prohibited altogether by the Long Parliament under Cromwell, who, curiously enough, had himself taken part in a morality play when an under-graduate at Trinity College, Cambridge. The piece was the Combat between the Tongue and the Five Senses, and Oliver Cromwell played the part of Touch.

At the renaissance of the stage the puppet drama revived also, and does not appear, even in the worst days of the Restoration, to have lent itself to the immoralities and indecencies that disgraced the plays of that period.

We are now approaching that epoch when our friend Punch appears on the miniature stage in his own peculiar character.

Mr. Payne Collier thinks this character first appeared in 1688, and came in with the House of Orange at the great Revolution. On the other hand, Grainger, in his Biographical History, asserts that traces of him are to be found before that time, and he is of opinion that he came from France in the retinue of the Stuarts at the Restoration to dethrone the old Vice.

It certainly is somewhat strange that authorities should be so little agreed as to the advent of this illustrious personage, whose appearance and character are sufficiently remarkable to justify us in expecting a little more exact information on this point. But in truth this uncertainty as to the time when Punch is said to have arrived in England is one reason which leads to a doubt whether he is an independent and original character, rather than (as has been suggested) an adaptation of the character of the old Vice, or perhaps an amalgamation of that personality with some other. One thing is certain, that after the introduction of Punch into the puppet drama in England the old Vice disappeared, whilst his rôle was continued in the part taken by Punch. Several theories of the derivation of this name have been started; perhaps the most commonly received was that which professed to see some connexion between Punch and Pontius Pilate, and between Judy and Judas. But this is the merest speculative etymology, suggested by the alliteration of the words. The best authorities are quite agreed that the name Punch is really Pulcinella, abbreviated to suit the taste of the English language. It must be conceded that our Punch gets his name from Italy, but his modern character and his play were conceived in England.

The part of the Italian Pulcinella was much more that of harlequin or clown than that of our Punch. He filled up the gaps in the piece with jokes and by-play, and was by no means the principal personage, round whom, as in the case of Punch, all the rest revolve. His part was that of mimicry and buffoonery, like that of the ancient Roman mimes, from whom his character seems to be derived.

But the French claim to have had a personage called Polichinelle as early as the reign of Henry the Fourth, who was assassinated in 1610. Some of the couplets he used to sing in his play are preserved, and refer to the wars with Spain which took place in this reign. They run thus:

Je suis le Polichinelle,
Qui fait le sentinelle,
A la porte de Nesle;
Je suis le fameux Mignolet,
General des Espagnolets, &c.

The last line, alluding to the Spanish wars, places the date of the song certainly as early as 1590, whilst no one has claimed a birth for the Italian Pulcinella earlier than the beginning of the seventeenth century.

It appears, then, that a character called Polichinelle, utterly different from the modern Punch, was known in France in the sixteenth century, and it has been already shown that the character of the Italian Pulcinella was not that of the Punch as we know it, but that of clown or harlequin. The origin of our friend's name may be Italian or French, but he himself, as known to us, and his play, are undoubtedly English.

It was, however, not in his present character of chief performer in his own drama that Punch first appeared, but in one that combined the parts of the clown in a pantomime and that of the old Vice. Even as late as 1697 Punch was a roystering blade, with nothing of the mixture of the character of Bluebeard and Don Juan that he assumed later. Addison has described him at this date in a charming Latin poem, which was published at Oxford in 1698, in a volume entitled Musarum Anglicanum Delectus Alter, and of a few lines of which the following is submitted as a translation:

A tiny folk disports itself among
The trappings round a tiny stage uphung,
But o'er the rest a mannikin is seen,
Of harshly croaking voice and pompous mien.
Huge is his stomach, swelling proud and high;
Behind, a monstrous hump-back meets the eye.

Oft doth he seek the converse of the fair;
With saucy lip doth court the lover's bliss,
And still on cheek reluctant prints the kiss.

The puppet-show of Punch here described was apparently that of Powell, which enjoyed great popularity at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The following advertisement of a sort of miracle play, in which Punch appears, serves to show what his part in the puppet drama was in 1703. It is to be found in Strutt's Ancient Mysteries, page 230:

"At Crawley Lodge, opposite the Crown Tavern in Smithfield, there will be performed during St. Bartholomew Fair, a little play called the Ancient Creation of the World, newly touched up and improved by the addition of the Deluge. Many fountains will play during the piece. The last scene will show Noah and his family going out of the Ark, with the animals in pairs, and all the birds of the air perched upon trees. Finally, by means of various contrivances, will be seen the bad rich man going into Hell, and Lazarus being carried into Abraham's bosom. Several figures will dance jigs, sarabands, and quadrilles, to the admiration of the spectators, all accompanied by the joyous fantasies of Segnior Punch and Sir John Spendall."

It was a very common incident of these puppet-plays to introduce Punch into the Ark, for it is related by the author of

Punch and Judy, that in one of these shows of the Deluge, Punch appears from behind the curtain, when the rain begins to fall, and observes to the patriarch, "Very hazy weather, Master Noah."

A most amusing account of Mr. Powell's celebrated puppet-show, in which Punch appeared, is given in the sixteenth number of the Tatler. Two fashionable ladies are striving for the leadership of society at Bath, and the test is, which will get the world to follow her to the amusement she selects on a particular evening. The one invites her friends to go with her to the theatre to see the play of Alexander the Great; the other calls her followers to her house to see the creation of the world. This lady carried all before her, and her house was crowded, because it was given out that no one could get in, but here the Tatler must be allowed to speak for himself. "When we came to Noah's flood in the show, Punch and his wife were introduced dancing in the Ark. An honest plain friend of Florimel's, but a critic withal, rose up in the midst of the representation, and made many very good exceptions to the drama itself, and told us it was against all morality, as well as the rules of the stage, that Punch should be in jest in the Deluge, or, indeed, should appear at all. This was certainly a just remark, and I thought to second him, but he was hissed by the other party, whereupon we, who were his friends, hissed him too. Old Mrs. Petulant desired her daughter to mind the moral, and whispered to Mistress Mayoress, 'This is very proper for young people to see.' Punch at the end of the play was very civil to the whole company, making bows till his buttons touched the ground."

In no one of the three authentic scenes here quoted does the rôle of Punch at all resemble that which he adopted in late years; it seems, therefore, to follow that his own peculiar drama was the work of a later age. The particular time when Punch changed his character to become a roué and a murderer is not precisely known, but from a satire of Swift, written in 1728, and addressed to a friend under the name of Timothy, we learn that he had then taken steps in that direction.

In 1790 he had quite accepted his wicked rôle, as we learn from the following verses (taken from Mr. Payne Collier's book on Punch and Judy), which date from that period:

Oh hearken now to me awhile
A story I will tell you,
Of Mr. Punch who was a vile
Deceitful murderous fellow:
Who had a wife, a child also,
And both of matchless beauty,
The infant's name I do not know
Its mother's name was Judy.
Right toll de roll, &c.

Since 1790, Punch has continued to play the part here assigned to him. From time to time incidents of popular interest have been introduced into his drama, as they are now introduced into the pantomime, but the main features of the play remain the same, and probably ever will, since they have been so successfully stereotyped by Mr. Payne Collier and Mr. Cruikshank.

THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XXXIII. BID'S CASTLE.

When May awoke next morning, she found that she had been dreaming that Bid had spoken to her of a thing, which in reality the old woman had forborne to mention. Said Bid, "Paul Finiston promised me a corner of land, and that he would build me a little hut upon it. It gladdened my old heart to think that I should have a house I could call my own; but I find that he has forgotten me."

When May awoke she remembered that Paul had made this promise to Bid, and had failed to keep it. She turned the case over in her mind while she was dressing, and out of her solicitude in the matter there sprang a bright suggestion as to her own difficulties. She put on a spring-like dress made by her own fingers, hoping that Paul would approve it, of little blue and white stripes upon gracefully flowing cambric, and confined by a pretty ribbon at the waist. She wound a scarf about her shoulders, and went up the road to look for Paul, having some idea that he would come for breakfast after his absence the night before. As she walked along the sunny path by the river, she found that, early as she was, Katherine had been out before her. Here were Paul and Katherine coming over the stile.

But May's new born hope was strong enough to stand even this blow. Katherine was surprised to see her come onward towards the stile with an open smile and no trace of anger. She had thought to see her turn and go home, alone, offended, and in distress.

"Good morning," said May, brightly, "the spring is all alive in the air."

"We have not been thinking of the weather," said Katherine, shrugging her shoulders.

"I had not noticed it before," said Paul, looking about him with a dull air.

Katherine cast an insolent glance at May; but May took no notice of her, only slipped round to Paul's other side, and began chattering merrily to him, of the rabbit that had run across her feet, and the fishes that she had seen leaping in the river, and presently she broke out into chirruping and carolling in musical mimicry of a lark in the clouds. Paul's dulness melted away. He listened to her with delight, and new life came into her veins when she found that she still possessed the power to give him pleasure.

She followed up her advantage, and after breakfast, when Katherine had gone to her room to put on her out-door dress, in order to be ready to accompany Paul when he should go out, May stole her arm through his, and scampered off with him, making him run with her along the paths, and never stopping till she sank panting and laughing at his feet, safely hidden under the shelter of a great haystack.

Luckily Paul's little flicker of good spirits had not expired. He smiled when she laughed, and asked what she meant by leading him such a dance. But the race had done him good; for there was light in his eyes, and the old natural tone in his voice.

"Oh," said May, "I have been so longing for a race. I feel the spring in my veins, and I am ready for any mischief. How I wish we could climb the mountain together—only you and I."

"Let us go at once!" said Paul.

"Ah! but I mean to take a whole day to it. I have got a little plan, if you will only like it. You remember Bid the Traveller?"

Paul's brow contracted with nervous pain. "I promised her a cabin," he said; "but Simon——"

"Never mind Simon; we won't ask his leave. It can't be any harm to take a loan of a mountain rock. We'll go up as high as the Kearneys', and build the old woman a hut. Simon need never hear of it—he'll never get so far; and if this is bad morality I'll take the sin on my own shoulders."

"The plan is good," said Paul, "if we can only carry it out."

"Oh, it will be easily done! I'll make all the arrangements, and we'll build the hut with our own hands. The only trouble will be to get away from Miss Archbold."

Again Paul's face clouded.

"But I will be rude to my guest for once," said May. "I have made up my mind to that. She shall not know where we have been until we are home again."

"Do not breathe it in the house then," said Paul, "or she will be right upon our track. We shall have a good time together; a thing we have not enjoyed for many a day."

Thus it was settled, and May entered vigorously into preparations for her stolen day in the hills. Even Miss Martha was not told of it until after Katherine had gone to her chamber on the night before the event; and at four o'clock on a starry morning May, with Bid and Mrs. Kearney's lads, met Paul, who was waiting for them at the foot of the mountain. With much laughing and merry jokes the party began the ascent by the light of torches made of lighted cones of straw which the gossoons carried in their hands, and flourished above their heads as they danced on before the rest, showing the way. Presently Con the fool started out of a bush, and he too must have a torch, with which he played strange pranks for the amusement of the rest, firing the wild whins and thorns as he went along, so that a crackling line of flame flared out and flew after him, then writhed away in sparks into darkness. May and Paul followed, and laughed as they trod the sparks under their feet. They were once more a pair of children, as they had been in the old time before Paul put his hand to the miser's work, or Katherine came to vex them. They forgot the curse, and all else that had troubled them.

By the time they reached the Kearneys' house the day had begun to break, and during a pale chill half-hour our curious little party were glad to gather into the cabin to bask in the warmth of the fire before beginning the operations of the day. Then Nan and her mother led the way to where the building materials had been collected during the past few days; goodly blocks of bogwood, stones of a handy size, a mess of excellent mortar made of mud and other ingredients, after a famous mountain receipt; heaps of clay, bundles of tough and knotty twigs; sheaves of rushes and rods, and a store of straw for the thatching. A council was held as to the site on which Bid's castle was to be built; and finally a spot was chosen which was dry and sheltered because of a rock which stood behind it, very fit to keep off the storm, yet not high enough to intercept the sun. Bid and the house-mother, Nan and Con, Paul and the gossoons, stood by and watched while May laid the first stone of the little

edifice; the sun suddenly rising to witness the ceremony, the mountains blushing, and the smoke of the Kearneys' cabin turning wonderfully into flame.

Then the work began, every one present lending a hand. Bid and the house-mother trundled the blocks to the builders' feet; May brought the mortar, Nan carried the clay, while Paul and Con and the gossoons laid stone over stone and piled log above log. By nine o'clock the walls had grown wonderfully, and the builders retreated again to Mrs. Kearney's cabin, where the kettle was found boiling and a hamper had been unpacked. Tea, white bread, and toasted ham for the builders; never was a merrier breakfast. Then the work went on again, and by noon the walls had risen to their full height, which was just two feet higher than Bid's silvered head.

Paul and May left the work for an hour's rest, and wandered away to explore the heathery world. Paul was in happy mood; with May's hand in his own, and the mountain air blowing on him, he was comfortable and at peace, and tasted the rarest enjoyment. With a strange lapse of memory, which was habitual to him now, he forgot the engagement which he had made with the miser, and talked to May of their future home, and of his mission among the people. May seemed to walk on air, and laughed out aloud, that she might not weep for joy. They came on a tiny stream, so hidden in the moss that it seemed going on a secret errand to the lower world, and they tracked it for a mile and hunted it from its ambush till it fled from their pursuit down a chink in the steep rock. An eagle wheeled over their heads, and they watched with breathless interest while it dropped to the valley for its prey. They counted the different kinds of flowers, the homes within range of their eyes, and the sails on the distant sea. Such interests were enough for the moment, and they wished no deeper subjects for conversation. They understood each other so well that they had scarcely need of words.

The new house was a tiny dwelling, but a castle to homeless Bid. A smooth flag was laid for a hearthstone, and a fire kindled at once to dry the floor of clay. The gossoons at their leisure would daub tar on the unseasoned rafters, and dash the inner walls with sand; and when it was known throughout the country that the "thraveller" had got a home, there was many a little necessary for housekeeping that would come offering itself to Bid. A "creepie stool" would be the gift of one friend, a bit of delft that of another; a third would spare a skillet (saucepan), and a fourth bestow a kettle. May promised a bed of the best goose-feathers, a teapot, and a dresser, with some pretty cups and plates. Paul gave money, to be expended at the next fair held in the little shiny white town which could be seen from Bid's new doorway. There she could find whatever other luxuries the magnificence of her new housekeeping might require, as well as a basket of simple wares which she might sell for her future livelihood about the country. "There are worse trades than a pedlar's," said Paul. "You know I have tried it myself;" which made the little group of builders burst out laughing through their tears.

The sun had set when May and Paul set out to walk homeward down the mountain. Before they left, Bid knelt down on her floor and pronounced a blessing on their heads which turned the listeners pale with awe; and after they were gone she shut her door to be alone under her own roof awhile with her gratitude and her God. When Nan, after awhile, came tapping to her door, the girl was half afraid to go in; but Bid's passion had spent itself, and she was now ready and willing to be bidden to a feast. May had bequeathed to the house-mother the remaining contents of the hamper, and there was a merry supper-party at Mrs. Kearney's.

In the mean time May and Paul went their way down the road homeward, with the beggar's prayer following them, tracking their feet like a trail of light as they threaded the sombre shades of the Wicked Woods.

CHAPTER XXXIV. TIBBIE FINDS A "DEVIL TO DO HER WILL."

When Tibbie parted from Katherine in the mansion of Tobereevil the old creature did not hastily retreat from the shelter of its roof. She was too much interested in the golden-haired lady who had promised her a mandrake to lose sight of her for a moment, so long as she was within reach; and so followed her stealthily from room to room, peering at her through key-holes and cracks in crazy doors. When Paul came upon Katherine, up in the lobby of the goblin presses, Tibbie espied him from a room at the lower end of the passage, and was witness of all that passed between the two young people. She was keen enough to discern that Katherine had a mind to be mistress of Tobereevil in spite of her

contempt for and enmity towards the heir; also that Paul "didn't cotton to her, for all her grandeur and her beauty."

Why this should be Tibbie could not guess. The poor and the ugly might be slighted and disliked, but wherefore the rich and lovely? Tibbie was bewildered. Another cause of amazement to her was that Katherine, thus in want of luck herself, should choose to be so foolish as to give away her mandrake; and she did not doubt that things had gone wrong with her since she first thought of parting with it. However this might be, these reflections made Tibbie a hundred times more anxious to get possession of the luck-spirit. Katherine might repent, and keep it to herself. And it after all the young lady were to be generous and keep her word? Tibbie felt no gratitude at the thought of so great a sacrifice made in her favour; she began to despise Katherine.

When Tibbie had done her eaves-dropping, she made her way carefully down stairs to her old haunts about the cellar and the kitchen. To tell the truth she had never ceased, for long, to be an inmate of the mansion. For a few nights after her dismissal she had sought shelter from the country people, who had given it out of charity, yet with but a shrinking sort of goodwill; and Tibbie knew that she was no favourite, and her vagrant life was irksome to her. So, after a little time, she came wandering back to the mansion, and at last boldly took up her quarters in the old place. She knew holes in the cellars where she could hide, if Simon took a fancy to come pattering down the stone staircase to make an inspection of his lower premises. This happened but seldom, and at other times Tibbie was free to do as she pleased. Her domestic arrangements were made upon so extremely scant a scale that all trace of them could be hidden at a moment's notice; and in the mean time she kept herself alive by pilfering from the nearest farms.

Tibbie was now out every day, watching to see Katherine bringing her the mandrake. When no Katherine appeared she was much disturbed. The young lady had then repented, and was going to play her false, Tibbie reflected, and thought she would like to punish her; and in the midst of these broodings a bright idea came into her cunning mind.

"I will buy the mandhrake from her wid a charm!" thought Tibbie, "an' I will work my will through her, in a way she little guesses."

So she went searching and grubbing among her bundles of rags which were stuffed in holes in the cellars, and she produced a package of dried herbs, which looked, some like dust, and some like ashes. After midnight, when Simon had finished his nightly excursions about the rooms, and was safe in bed, Tibbie kindled a fire, and placed a broken saucepan upon the blaze. Into this she shed two or three different kinds of powders from her store, taking care to mix them carefully. She hung over this saucepan for many hours of the night, and Con sat on the hearth, feeding the fire with the wicked faggots out of the woods; with his legs crossed, and an expression of doubt and discontent upon his flat white face. As the moments passed, he often glanced fearfully over his shoulder, fancying that Simon was on the staircase, and once he sprang up with a shriek, dropping the faggots on the hearth, and flew into a cellar, where he lay quaking for half an hour. Con's terror of the miser was on the increase; and though he had crept in here from habit when he found Tibbie on the spot, yet he seemed to know by instinct that she had now lost her power, and that she, too, was afraid of Simon. Tibbie did not much mind him, except to give him a push with her foot when she found him in her way; but when he came shivering out of the cellar, she gave him a shaking which taught him to be quiet during the rest of this vigil. No two people could be more different than Con at Tobereevil and Con up in the mountain. In the Kearneys' cabin the fool was light and active, and as frolicsome and merry as a squirrel, ready to help everybody, and grinning with contentment; down here he was dull and timid, and sometimes dangerous. But Tibbie did not heed him; he might growl if he pleased, and snarl too, if he had a mind. She was not one to be particular about manners.

When Tibbie's brewing was finished, she strained the stuff carefully, and put it in a clear glass bottle. It was a pale straw-coloured fluid, and looked very innocent. But Tibbie did not count it so.

"Love-charms!" muttered she, as she hid it in one of her secret holes; "there's no sich thing in the world. I tried them all round when I was a girl, and nobody would care about me. But let her give this to Paul Finiston, an' it'll make him as mad an' as silly as the omadhaun Con himsel'; an' then let the world judge betune them which is the fittest to be the masther o' Tobereevil."

When Katherine came from her room on

the morning on which Bid's castle was getting built, Miss Martha broke the truth to her as gently as might be, telling her that May and Paul had gone on business up to the mountain. Katherine recognised the trick that had been played on her, and her face took a strange expression. After breakfast, there being nothing better to do, she thought she could pass the time by going in search of Tibbie, so took her way to the woods, guessing she should meet the hag in this neighbourhood; and in this she was not wrong, for Tibbie was watching for her.

The meeting between the two was not so lively as it might have been, for Katherine was in bad humour and Tibbie full of suspicions. Tibbie's mood was changed, however, when she saw her mandrake emerge from many mysterious wrappings, and held it safely at last in her hands. She howled over it for joy, and kissed it with her withered lips. In her excitement she almost forgot her contempt for Katherine, who had been so silly as to give this treasure out of her keeping, and was ready to lay her grey hairs under the wonderful lady's feet.

"Try and keep steady, my good woman," said Katherine. "If you make so much noise about this you will be robbed. I advise you now to go back to Tobereevil, and take up your old duties without asking the miser's leave. You need not be afraid of him, now that you have got your mandrake."

"No," chuckled Tibbie, "I need not be afraid of him, an' if there's anythin' that Tibbie can do for your ladyship—mind, she'll do it an' welcome!"

Katherine looked at her, then gazed away darkly into the depths of the woods.

"I don't want anything of you," she said; "but if ever I should, remember what you have said. I shall return soon to Camlough, and it may be a long time before I set eyes on you again."

Tibbie had now secured and secreted her new possesion, and all her contempt returned for the creature who had been so foolish as to part with her luck. She fumbled among her rags and produced the straw-coloured bottle.

"Pardon, ladyship! but you said you were goin' to Camlough. Might I be bould enough to ax you if ye would leave this small message wid a young girl that lives on the roadside?"

"What is it?" said Katherine.

"Oh, thin, it's you that'll laugh at it, for ye'll niver want it," said Tibbie. "Sure its on'y a little charm, sich as simple bodies does use."

"A charm!" said Katherine, contemptuously.

"Ay, a love-charm. The girl was goin' to be married an' her sweetheart he turned agin her; but the charm will bring the love o' her back to his heart. If wan body gives this to drink till another body, she'll be the dear light o' his eyes for the remainder o' his life. He'll think her beautiful an' lovesome, an' wont be able to live out o' her sight. He'll forget them he cared for; an' the wan that giv' him to dhrink o' this—she may hould his heart an' his han'-an' his money an' his lans till the day o' his death!"

"What ridiculous stories you are telling!" said Katherine, angrily; and her eyes flashed from the bottle to the old woman's face, and from the face back to the bottle. "What could there be in a draught to work such a miracle?"

"Ay, ay! What could there be in a draught? Many a wan has axed that, an' yet the charm pushes its way. You keep yer eye on Sally, an' see if she's not married to her sweetheart in a month. But I humbly beg yer pardon for mentionin' sich foolishness. It's just like my impidence axin' a lady to do my business. I'll get some one goin' the roads that'll pass the bottle to Sal."

"Give it to me," said Katherine. "If the girl is to be made a fool of, I suppose I can do it. And now will bid you good morning, and I wish you good luck with your mandrake."

Tibbie's eyes twinkled as she surrendered the precious bottle, and in the midst of her profuse thanks Katherine turned abruptly and left her talking to the trees.

May and Paul were as well wearied as two people could wish to be when they came down the road that evening, and espied the lights shining in the windows of Monasterlea. Aunt Martha was glad to have them back again, for she had felt seriously in awe of Miss Archbold's darkened countenance. She had provided dinner with more than her usual care, and rejoiced at May's blooming cheeks and Paul's brightened manner, as the two sat down to table and related their adventures. Katherine was the most silent of the company; but when Paul rose up to go away she spoke.

"Stay a moment!" she said, "till I

make a request. I am going home to Camlough to-morrow. May I rely upon you to escort me, as I cannot go alone?"

"Going home!" echoed Miss Martha and May in a breath, and they both felt as if a weight had been rolled away from their hearts.

"Yes," said Katherine. "I shall ride, and send a carriage for my things."

"Had you not better send to Camlough, and ask your parents to come and fetch you," asked Miss Martha.

"No," said Katherine, bluntly; "I shall ride, and I shall ride alone if Mr. Finiston will not accompany me."

"That is out of the question," said Paul, now forced to speak. "If you insist upon going, of course I shall be your escort."

Katherine bowed slightly, and then turned to Miss Martha.

"You do not press me to stay," she said.

"No," said the old lady, "that would not be right. Inhospitable as it may sound, I think it quite time that you were at Camlough with your mother."

Katherine smiled slightly.

"Thank you," she said. "That is an honest speech at any rate. I thank you for all your hospitality. And you," she said to May, "I thank you also. I don't doubt that I shall yet find means to repay you what I owe you. I must say good-night, as I mean to be up so early."

Then she left the room.

"This is a nice piece of business," remarked Miss Martha, as soon as she was gone. "I must say, Paul, I wish you were not going with her."

"Why should he not go?" cried May, with glowing cheeks.

"I shall leave her at the door, and come straight back again," said Paul. "It is the last thing I could wish—to be her guest even for a night."

"You cannot come straight back; the journey is too long and too fatiguing," said Miss Martha. "But you can stay one night, and return the next day. May and I will not be jealous that time."

"Jealous!" said May. "Dear Aunty, what an ugly word! He shall stay two, three, four days—a whole month if he likes!" And she put her hand on Paul's shoulder with a happy look of trust.

"See how little she values me!" said Paul, smiling back her thanks into her shining face. And then she went out with him to the door, perhaps to see if the stars were still in the sky, and Miss Martha remained in the parlour, rejoicing very greatly as she put up her knitting for the night.

Paul and Katherine set out early next morning, and May and Miss Martha watched them as they rode away in the sunshine.

"Only till to-morrow evening, and then the good old times will have come back," May said to herself joyously as she nailed up loose rose-branches in her garden, and counted the little buds which were already getting red. The day was beautiful, and as full of hopefulnsss as herself. The ruins smiled darkly out of all the hollow sockets of their windows, and the cloisters gathered up their gloom, and hid it under the ivy. Some swallows had arrived during the night, and were making a great fuss about taking possession of their old homes in the chimneys and about the eaves. There was a great whirring and fluttering of wings everywhere, and though the new-comers had not got leisure to sit down and sing, yet the air was all filled with their melodious conversation. The birds were everywhere; long trains of rooks from Tobereevil sailing across the blue valley of the sky, whole coveys of yellow-hammers dropping like showers of gold upon the pillars of the old gate, while a goldfinch sat on May's window-sill, and sang into the chamber. In-doors, Bridget was hanging up draperies about the windows, and May decked the sills with boxes full of blossoms, the gayest and sweetest that the year had yet produced. All this long day she spent upon the flowers, working till past sunset, till the crescent crept up and sat upon the hills, and a multitude of stars came out to inspect her labours. Next day she gave her energies to the interior of the cottage. Many little household matters were taken up and shaken out, and looked all the fresher and prettier for having been disturbed by skilful hands. Pictures were re-hung, and old furniture brightened up. So passed the interval which May had got to spend before Paul could return to her, until, at last, the evening arrived. Dinner was waiting, and May sat on the doorstep watching the road. The sun went down, but Paul had not appeared. Miss Martha began to get fidgety, but May said:

"Wait a little, Aunty! It is such a long, weary road."

The old lady went back to the parlour. The place was very quiet, the air sweet and still. Oh, for the ring of a horse's hoof on the road! Never was there a watcher

more quiet yet more impatient than this one on the doorstep.

Miss Martha came out again.

"It is getting quite dark," she said, "and we really must dine. We can have something nice for supper, and he will enjoy it much more than if he finds he has kept us starving."

May agreed to this, and the evening lamps were lit. Dinner was served and sent away.

Miss Martha dozed, and the cat played with her knitting-ball. The tea-tray came and went—nine o'clock, ten o'clock. May walked up and down the garden paths, and Miss Martha warned her that she had better stay in-doors.

"You will only catch cold," she said, "and be laid up to-morrow when he comes. I must say I never saw you so very impatient before."

"No," said May, penitently; but she could not rest. Eleven o'clock passed, and then the cottage was all shut up. When May awoke next morning the birds were all singing as if something good must happen. She dressed herself in great haste and hurried out on the road. She climbed the old observatory in the belfry, but there was no sign of a horseman for miles along the road from the Golden Mountain.

She went about doing nothing all day. Her hands shook so, that they did mischief to everything they touched; so she gave up occupation and went about idly. When she spoke, her voice was irritable, and a flush burned on her cheek; and Aunt Martha scolded her, as she always did before offering her comfort.

"I must say, May, I did not think you could be so exacting. Why should he not stay at Camlough for a few days, if he pleased? I am quite sure Sir John counts it a godsend to get hold of him, and he never was there before, and he will have a great deal to see."

"He ought not to stay there just now," said May; and her voice had got quite sharp.

Miss Martha said no more, and another night went past. On the next day May's irritability had disappeared, every other feeling being swallowed up in amazement. She appeared quite stunned for the next two or three days, and it seemed a matter of course that the night and morning should come and go, and that Paul should not appear. She became suddenly very busy, and it might have been supposed that she had forgotten him. She developed an extraordinary taste for cooking, and cakes, jellies, preserves, and potted meats were ranged on the pantry shelves in unnecessary profusion before she began to perceive that she was going too fast.

"Aunt Martha," she said one morning, "we are badly in want of sugar."

"So we may be, considering the rate you are going at. I don't think I am growing stingy, but, my dear, you must not ruin me!"

May looked astonished, and then ashamed. She peeped into the store-room, and did not go back to it again for a fortnight. Her conscience twinged her when all the dainties came to table. The cooking had lasted a week, and then another fit came on. May would sew and sew as if her life depended on stitches. Every garment in the house came under her inspection; summer clothes were made, winter clothes were mended and laid past. But this also came to an end, and the twitching had not worked itself out of May's fingers.

She was now really at a loss; but a child came to her gate with a tale of a sick father, and May packed a little basket, and set off over the country to seek for the ailing man. A great many other tales were told to her after this, and for another good long spell of time she went trotting about after sickness with as much zeal as a sister of charity. But the weather was getting balmier every day, and in time her patients all got well except one old man who died; and May's active brain and limbs found themselves arrived at a full stop.

By this time it was early summer, and there had come no more news from Camlough than if it had been an island in the far seas, and boats had not as yet been invented. The Wicked Woods had put forth all their most splendid leafage, and Miss Martha's farm was a pleasant sight to look upon, with its meadows and corn-fields and newly-blooming gardens. The wild-roses were in the hedges, and the hawthorn and honey-suckle clambered on every wall, and peeped in at every window. All the sweets in the world seemed to abide at Monasterlea, except the one which sweetens all others—peace of mind.

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THE YELLOW FLAG.

BY EDMUND YATES,

AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "NOBODY'S FORTUNE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER III. HOME SWEET HOME.

FASHION, amidst the innumerable changes which she has insisted on, seems to have dealt lightly with Great Walpole-street. It may be that she has purposely left it untouched to remain an example of the heavy, solemn, solid style of a hundred years ago, a striking contrast to the "gardens," "crescents," "mansions," all stucco, plate-glass, and huge portico, of modern days; or it may be that finding it intractable, unalterable, unassailable, she has looked upon it as a relic of barbarism, and determined altogether to ignore its existence. Anyhow the street is very little changed since the days of its first erection; it still remains a long, and, to those gazing down it from either end, apparently interminable line of large, substantial, three-storied, dull-coloured brick houses, stretching from Chandos-square in the south to Guelph Park in the north, so long, so uniform, so unspeakably dreary as to give colour to the assertion of a celebrated wit who, on his death-bed moaning forth that "there is an end to all things," added feebly, "except Great Walpole-street."

In its precincts gravity and decorum have set up their head-quarters; on many of its door-plates the passer-by may read the names of distinguished members of the faculty, old in age and high in renown, pupils of Abernethy and Astley Cooper, who with the first few hundreds which they could scrape together after their degrees were obtained, hired, and furnished, as a first step to professional status, the houses in which they still reside, and in which they have since inspected so many thousand tongues, and passed the verdict of life or death upon so many thousand patients. Youth must be resident here and there in Great Walpole-street, as in other places, but if so, it is never seen. No nurse-maids with heads obstinately turned the other way drive the pleasant perambulator against the legs of elderly people airing themselves in the modified sunlight which occasionally visits the locality; no merry children troop along its pavement; from the long drawing-room windows hung with curtains of velvet and muslin issues no sound of piano or human voice. Although there is no beadle to keep inviolate its sanctity, the street-boy as he approaches its confines stops his shrill whistling, and puts his tip-cat into his pocket; the "patterers" of the second edition pass it by, conscious that the rumours of war, or of the assassination of eminent personages, will fall flat upon the ears of the inhabitants, while even the fragmentary announcement, "Elopement — young lady—noble markis," will fail in extracting the pence from the pockets of the denizens of the lower regions in this respectable quarter.

It is essentially a carriage neighbourhood, with ranges of mews branching out of, and running parallel to it; and the vehicles are quite in keeping with the street and with their owners. Besides the doctors' broughams, high swinging chariots, now scarcely ever seen save on drawing-room days or in carriage bazaars, with huge hammercloths and vast emblazoned panels, are there common enough. Roomy landaus, broad barouches, with fat horses, the leather of whose harness is almost invisible beneath the heavy silver plating, coachmen in curly white bob-wigs, and giant footmen gor-

geons in hair-powder, all these are to be found in Great Walpole-street.

Money, money, money! it all seems to say. We have money, and we will take care that you shall know it. We will not pay enormous rents for poky tenements in Mayfair, or straggling caravanseries in Tyburnia; we do not expend our substance in park-phaetons or Victorias any more than in giving "drums," or "at homes." We have, during the season, several dinner-parties; at which the wine set before you does not come from the grocer's or the publican's, but has been in our cellars for years; several musical evenings, and one or two balls. We go to the Opera three or four times during the season, occasionally to the theatre, frequently to a classical concert, or an oratorio; but we would as soon think of attending a prize-fight as a pigeon-match, or of prohibiting our womankind from going to church, as of taking them to listen to comic songs in a supper-room. We are rich, which you may be; but we are respectable, which you are not! Vaunt your fashion as much as you please, but the home of moneyed decency and decorum is Great Walpole-street.

Six o'clock on an October evening, with a chill damp wind howling at intervals through the funnel made by the opposing lines of houses, is not the time in which this locality looks its best. If it is dreary in the spring brightness, in the summer sunshine, it is doubly dreary in the autumn decadence, when the leaves torn from the trees in Guelph Park mix with the dust and bits of straw and scraps of paper which gather together in swerving eddies in every possible corner, and when in most of the houses the shutters are still closed, and the blinds have not shed the newspaper coverings in which they have been enwrapped during the absence of the inhabitants. In one of the largest houses of the street, however, on the particular October evening in question, no such signs of absenteeism were visible; the whiteness of the broad door-step was unsullied, the plate-glass windows were free from speck or spot, the dwarf wire blinds in the dining-room stood rigidly defiant of all criticism, and the muslin curtains in the drawing-room seemed to have lost all the softness and pliancy of their nature, and hung stiff, and white, and rigid, as the gaunt and bony hands which from time to time pushed them on one side, as the blank and colourless face which from time to time peered through them into the street. These hands and that face belonged to Mrs. Calverley, the mistress of the mansion. A thin, spare woman of fifty years of age, with a figure in which were angles where there should have been roundness, and straightness of outline where there should have been fulness. Her silk dress was of an undecided fawn-colour, and in place of any relieving white collar, she wore a wisp of black net round her throat. Her face was long, with a large straight nose, prominent eyes of steely blue, and a long upper lip, between which and its thin pallid companion there gleamed a row of strong white teeth. Her thin scanty iron-grey hair was taken off from her forehead above the temples and gathered into a small knot at the back; such an expanse of colourless flesh, such a dull level waste of human features unrelieved by the slightest scintilla of interest or sympathy!

In her prim, flat-soled creaking shoes, Mrs. Calverley walked to the window, pushed back the curtains, and looked out down the silent street; then, with a sound which was something between a sigh of despair and a snort of defiance, she returned to the low prie-dieu chair worked in wool, but covered with a shiny, crackling, yellow substance, and arranging her scanty drapery around her, interwove her bony fingers in her lap and sat bolt upright, staring rigidly before her. All the furniture in the room which was capable of being covered up was clad in a uniform of brown holland, the chairs were dressed in pinafores, the big broad sofa had a loosely cut great-coat of the same material; even the chandeliers had on holland bags. There was no light in the room, but the gas lamps in the street were reflected from the bare shining rose-wood table, from the long grand pianoforte, from the huge ormolu clock ticking gravely on the mantelpiece, from the glass shades enshrining wax flowers and fruit, which made such a poor pretence of being real, and from the old-fashioned handsomely cut girandoles. By the chair in which Mrs. Calverley was seated stood a frame of Berlin work; in the middle of the hearth-rug before the fire-place—fireless now, and filled with a grim pattern of cut coloured paper—lay a stuffed white-haired dog, intently regarding his tail through his glass eyes, and apparently wondering what he had done in life to be consigned to such a degraded position.

A quarter-past six, half-past, a quarter to seven, ring out from the neighbouring

church, and at each sound of the chimes Mrs. Calverley rises to her feet, creaks across to the window, looks forth, creaks back again, and resumes her stony position. At length there comes a half-timid ring of the bell, which she recognises at once, straightens her back, and settles herself more rigidly than ever. A few minutes after, the drawing-room door opens, and a voice, the owner of which cannot be seen, is heard saying, "Dear me, all in darkness, Jane?"

Mrs. Calverley makes no reply, but rings the bell, and when the servant appears, says to him in a thin acid voice, "You can light the gas, James, and now that your master has come home at last, dinner can be served."

Upon this remark, Mr. Calverley's only comment is a repetition of "Dear me." He is a middle-sized, pleasant-looking man, with fair hair, slightly sprinkled with grey, grey whiskers, light-blue eyes, and marvellous pink and white complexion like a doll. A gentlemanly-looking man in his plain black frock-coat and waistcoat, grey trousers, black silk cravat, and pearl pin, and neat buttoned boots. He looks rather nervously to his wife, and edges his way towards her round the table. When he is within a few feet of her he produces a newspaper from his pocket, and makes a feeble tender of it, saying, "The evening paper, my dear; I thought you would like to see——"

"I should like to see you attempt to relieve the monotony of my life, Mr. Calverley, and not to leave me here alone, while you were doubtless enjoying yourself."

"My dear, I assure you I have come straight home."

"Did business detain you until after six o'clock in Mincing-lane?"

"No, my dear, of course not till six o'clock; I walked home, and on my way I just looked in at the club, and——"

"At the club!" That was all Mrs. Calverley said, but the manner in which she said it, had its due effect. Mr. Calverley opened the leaves of a photograph album, with every portrait in which he was thoroughly familiar, and began to be extremely interested in its contents.

"Dinner will be ready directly," said Mrs. Calverley; "had you not better wash your hands?"

"Thank you, my dear," said the disconsolate man; "but I washed them at the cl——" He pulled himself up just in time; the obnoxious word had very nearly slipped out, but the servant announcing dinner at the moment, and Mrs. Calverley laying the tips of her bony fingers in the hollow of her husband's arm, the happy pair proceeded to the banquet.

It was a good dinner, handsomely served, but Mr. Calverley can scarcely be said to have enjoyed it. At first he audibly asked for wine, but after he had been helped three or four times, he glanced hurriedly across the long table, at the other end of which his wife was seated, and furtively motioned to the butler by touching his glass. This pantomime and its results were soon noticed by Mrs. Calverley, who, after glaring at her husband for a moment, gave a little shiver, and said:

"It is of no use paying Doctor Chipchase his fees if his advice is to be scouted in this manner; you know what he said about your drinking wine!"

"My dear, I only——"

"You only fly in the face of Providence, Mr. Calverley, and behave unjustly to the office in which your life is insured. You only add another to the long catalogue of weaknesses and moral cowardices, by the constant display of which you render my life a burden to me. I am sick of talking to you myself. I shall write and ask Martin to come and stay with us for a few weeks, and see what effect his influence will have upon you."

"I am sure I shall be very glad to see Martin, my dear," said Mr. Calverley, after standing up reverently to say grace on the removal of the cloth; "he is a very good fellow, and——"

"Don't talk of a clergyman of the Church of England in that way, Mr. Calverley, if you please; 'good fellow,' indeed! My son Martin is a good man, and an ornament to his calling."

"Yes, my dear, of course he is; preaches an excellent sermon, does Martin, and intones quite musically. I should like to see him a little more cheerful, I mean a little less ascetic you know; take his wine more freely, and not look quite so much as if he was fed upon parched peas and filtered water."

"You are profane, as usual," said his wife. "Whenever you touch upon any member of my family, your temper gets the better of you, and your uncontrollable tendency to scoffing and scepticism breaks forth. Perhaps you will not think it too much trouble to pass me the biscuits."

"My dear Jane!" murmured the wretched man, and after handing the silver biscuit-

barrel to his wife, he sat by, not daring to help himself to another glass of wine from the well-filled decanters before him, while the mere fact of seeing her munching away at the hard farinaceous food nearly drove him mad with thirst.

When Mrs. Calverley had concluded this succulent repast, she rose from her seat, and, without taking any notice of her husband, creaked stiffly out of the room. John Calverley, lover of ease and tranquillity as he was, scarcely regretted this little conjugal dispute, inasmuch as that if Mrs. Calverley had not, in consequence of the words that had passed between them, been on her dignified behaviour, she would have remained to lock up the wine. Whereas John managed to swallow two glasses of his favourite Madeira before he joined her in the drawing-room.

It was not very cheerful in the drawing-room; the gas had been turned low down, and the principal light in the room, much softened and shaded, came from a reading-lamp placed immediately above the work-frame at which Mrs. Calverley's bony fingers were busily engaged depicting the story of Jael, with a very rugged profile, and Sisera, the death glare in whose eyes was represented by a couple of steel beads. John Calverley, furtively wiping his lips after the Madeira, shambled awkwardly into the room, and could scarcely repress a groan at the ghastliness of its appearance. But the generous wine which he had drunk helped to cheer him a little; and after wandering to and fro in a purposeless manner, he approached his wife, and said:

"Wont you play something, dear?"

"No, thank you," replied Mrs. Calverley, "I wish to finish this work."

"It is rather a nice thing," said John, bending over the production, and criticising it in a connoisseur-like manner; "what is it all about?"

"It is well that no one is here to hear this lamentable display of ignorance," said Mrs. Calverley, with a snort. "It is a scriptural story, Mr. Calverley, and is intended as a footstool for the church of St. Beowulph."

"Oh yes," said John, nodding his head. "I know—Bewsher's place."

"It would be more decent, as well as more correct, to speak of it as the church in which Mr. Bewsher is officiating minister, I think," said Mrs. Calverley, with another snort.

"To be sure, my dear; quite correct," said peace-loving John. "By the way, talking about officiating ministers, perhaps you had better not ask Martin to come to us just yet; I have got to go down to that place in the North next week."

"What place in the North?" said Mrs. Calverley, looking up.

"What place? Why, my dear, Swartmoor, of course—the foundry, you know; that's the only place I go to in the North."

"I don't know what place you do or do not go to in the North, or anywhere else, Mr. Calverley," said his wife, sticking her needle into the canvas, and interlacing her bony fingers and sitting bolt upright, as she glared straight at him; "I only know this, that I am determined not to stand this state of things much longer."

"But, my dear——"

"Don't 'my dear' me, if you please, but listen to what I have to say. When I married you, Mr. Calverley, to my sorrow, now some ten years ago, you were nothing more than the head clerk in the house of Lorraine Brothers, which my grandfather had founded, which my father and uncles had established, and in which my late husband, Mr. Gurwood, had been a sleeping partner."

"I must say that——"

"Silence, if you please, I will not be interrupted. I took you from that inferior position, and made you my husband. I made you master of this house and my fortune. I raised you, Mr. Calverley. I tell you, I raised you, sir, from obscurity to position, from comparative penury to wealth; and what is my reward? Day after day you are absent from home at your counting-house in Mincing-lane. I don't object to that, I suppose it is necessary, but I know—yes, I know, Mr. Calverley—this is not my first experience of men of business; I have been a grand-daughter, a daughter, and a sister of the firm, and though latterly Mr. Gurwood was not quite regular in his attendance, at least at one time he was an excellent man of business—so that I may say also the wife of the firm, and I know that business hours are over at five, and that my sainted father used then to come straight home to Clapham by the omnibus."

"I——"

"You must allow me to speak, if you please; I will not be interrupted. Instead of which, I find you going to your club and dawdling there to the latest minute, often keeping my dinner waiting, and when you return home, your conversation is frivolous, your manner light and flighty, and

wanting in repose, your tastes and habits evidently unsuitable to a person in the position of my husband. I have borne all this without complaint, I know that all of us mortals—sinful mortals—have a cross to bear, and that you have been bestowed upon me in that capacity! But, be a lone deserted woman when I have a husband whose legitimate business it is to stay at home and take care of me, I will not! These Swartmoor Works are all very well, I dare say, and I know you declare that they bring in a vast deal of profit; but there was profit enough in my father's time without any of your iron works; and if you intend to continue paying them a visit every fortnight, and staying several days away, as you have done lately, they shall be given up, Mr. Calverley—they shall be given up, I say! I may be of no more concern to you than a chair or a table, but I will not be a deserted woman, and these iron works shall be given up!"

Those who had seen but little of the pleasant-faced John Calverley, would scarcely have recognised him in the darkly frowning man who now strode forward, and crossing his arms on the back of a chair immediately in front of his wife, said in a very quiet but very determined voice:

"They shall not be given up! Understand that once for all—they shall not be given up! You may say what you like, but I am master in my business, if not in my home, and they shall not be given up! And now, Jane, you must listen to me, must listen to words which I never intended to have said, if the speech you have just made had not rendered it necessary. You have told me what you have pleased to call facts, now I will give you my version of them. When I married you ten years ago—and God knows you cannot deplore that marriage more heartily than I do—I was, as you say, the head clerk of the firm which your father had established. But in his latter days he had been ill and inattentive to business, and after his death your uncles, to whom the concern was left, proved themselves utterly inadequate to its guidance; and if it had not been for me, the firm of Lorraine and Company would have been in the Gazette. You know this well enough; you know that I, as head clerk, took the whole affair on my shoulders, reorganised it, opened out new avenues for its commerce, and finally succeeded in making it what it was when you first saw me. You taunt me with having been raised by you from penury to position; but you know that the whole of your fortune was embarked in the business, and that if it had not been for my clear head and hard work, you would have lost every penny of it. You accuse me of being light and frivolous and unsuited to you, of being away from my home, though, except on these business expeditions, not an evening do I pass out of your society. In return, I ask you what sort of a home you make for me? what sign of interest, of comfort, of anything like womanly grace and feeling is there about it? What reception do I meet with on my return from business? what communion, what reciprocity is there between us? Every word I say, every remark I make, you either sneer or snap at! You are a hard, intolerant Pharisee, Jane Calverley! By your hardness and intolerance, by your perpetually nagging and worrying at him, you tried to break the spirit of your former husband, George Gurwood, one of the kindest fellows that ever lived. But you failed in that, you only drove him to drink and to death. Now I have said my say, have said what I never intended should pass my lips, what never would have passed them, if it had not been for your provocation. I wish you good-night—I am now going to the club."

So saying, John Calverley bowed his head and passed from the room, leaving his wife no longer rigid and defiant, but swaying herself to and fro, and moaning helplessly.

VERY STRANGE TIMES.

If certain small quartos tell truth, the most wonderful years ever seen in this land of ours were the years 1660 and 1661, when the elements in turn became "instruments of fear and warning," in a manner calculated to fright the isle out of its propriety, or the people out of the isle. The recorders of these strange events vouch for their informants being all honourable men, so, for convenience sake, we will, for the moment, assume the tales they tell to be true; not wild hallucinations, or, worse still, pure inventions for the benefit of a political party under a cloud.

Comets, meteors, triple moons, blazing stars, blood-running streams, earthquakes, and whirlwinds figure in the catalogue of omens dire, but these are mere trifles. Two suns rose over Somerset, each carrying a mounted warrior within its circumference, directing the movements of two great armies

marshalled in the heavens, one of which took the northern sun by assault, and caused its armed tenants to evacuate it; when the rival luminaries amalgamated, the rival legions vanished, and the sun set in such lurid splendour that the country beneath appeared like fields of blood and fire. At Horsham, a great light divided and displayed two distinct armies, the amazed spectators beholding

> Fierce fiery warriors fight upon the clouds,
> In ranks and squadrons, and right form of war,

until the descent of a thick fog, smelling strongly of villanous powder, hid the conflict from their astonished eyes. Near Thame appeared a great light upon the ground, which gathered itself up into a pillar of fire, wherein could be plainly seen "an arm brandishing a flaming sword." Strange noises in the air startled four beancutters at two o'clock one September morning. One of the four had served as drummer in the king's army, and his ear recognised the sound of the call, then of a battle, with clash of armour, much "skreeking" and dying moans, the hubbub continuing until daybreak. Three honest Kentish men saw three blood-red clouds suddenly assume the forms of men, now on foot, now on horseback, dividing into parties, and engaging in fierce combats; these presently vanished, giving place to two mounted warriors, who, melting into nothingness, left the sky in possession of a giant phantom overshadowed by a gallows; and he, too, after triumphing awhile, disappeared. A pleasanter vision greeted some Lincolnshire field-workers, who heard beautiful music coming from they knew not where; soon they descried a large yellow cloud filled by a crowd of armed men marching in military order, followed by a body of youths and a multitude of children, the music rising higher and higher, until the mysterious procession passed out of sight.

The lesser lights could not set their watch in the sky without betraying belligerent propensities. Two stars, as big as the moon, appeared from under a fiery cloud at Ilford, and contended for supremacy, until one grew smaller and smaller, and finally disappeared altogether, while its conqueror, increased in size and lustre, poured forth streams of fire and blood for a couple of hours. Cornish folks were puzzled by the appearance of a large star, from which dangled the red-footed legs of a man. To this entered a square black thing three inches broad, taking up its quarters between the legs and the star; then a second star came, and drove the first comer from the sky. Three men going to Ware were smitten by lightning, after which the sky grew so bright they thought there must be a great fire raging not far off; while they speculated as to its whereabouts, the fire ascended into the sky, three stars falling from it as it went, and flooding the earth with light. An ex-captain of the Life Guards, travelling between Ilford and Romford in company with an attorney's son, saw a fiery light issue from between two stars, take the shape of a bell, "as big as a candlestick," and fall down before them, illuminating the way so that they could distinguish the smallest pebbles on the road. Another midnight wanderer witnessed a shameful assault upon the queen of night; a bodiless arm striking fair Luna eight times with a sword, darkening her brightness with every stroke. May be it was indignation at such treatment that impelled the moon to shine in Somersetshire without reflecting the least shadow of hedge or tree, house or man.

Upon Coronation Day a person of honour, being moreover a knight and the son of a recusant, saw the perfect representation of a fortified town in the sky, while another gentleman beheld Windsor Castle standing amid the clouds in company with two other castles, names unknown. After this it is not surprising to hear of six Yorkshiremen seeing two or three steeples and several cathedrals floating high in air, some burning, some rent in twain, some upside down; or of some Sussex folks being bewildered by the appearance of three pulpits occupied by men in black, until the said men—parsons, of course—were expelled by a party of armed men, the exhibition concluding with two phantom men being drawn at a cart's-tail along the edge of a cloud. An inhabitant of "Darkin in Surrey," taking a walk one evening, beheld a strange cloud, and in it two churches, one in the form of a cathedral, very spacious and glorious, having upon it many goodly pinnacles. As he looked he thought it grew to a greater splendour and glory, glittering exceedingly. He saw, also, not far from it, another church, in comparison very mean, and specially observed that when the cathedral appeared most glorious the little church seemed most dark and obscure, but plainly discerned a very bright star in the midst of it, and another between the two edifices. Then he perceived a puff of breath upon the stately cathedral, and

immediately it fell and vanished, while the little church with the star on it waxed more and more glorious, but "upon some special occasion being called into his house, he saw not the end of it."

Among other aërial apparitions may be noted that of a lion standing over a party of reapers in a corn-field; of a pair of lions in Devonshire; and of a lion, unicorn, and bear in another quarter. The sailors in the Downs were startled one morning by seeing a lion in the eastern, and a dragon in the western heavens, engaged in a fierce fight, for the amusement, apparently, of a couple of giants. These, fading away, were succeeded by three naked men, airy castles, towns, and villages, finishing up with a terrific display of blood and fire. The master of a ship passing the Shingles saw a cloud rise from the ocean to a great height, and then let fall a long sword with fire issuing from its point, which, striking the sea, raised up a fearful storm. A wedding party, strolling on the banks of the Severn, saw a cloud rise out of the river, which opened and displayed a tall black man with a meagre face, running to and fro for a little while, and then giving place to a man on horseback, who retired to make way for a beautiful lady, who, after taking a stately walk, disappeared, and then the cloud itself dispersed into thin air. More curious still was the phantom on a white horse appearing in a cloud near Gloucester, for that descended into a meadow, careering therein with wonderful swiftness, to the dismay of the lookers-on, who turned and fled, while the object of their terror reascended into the cloud, and quickly sailed beyond their view.

One summer evening a Berkshire gentleman saw an incredible number of divers-shaped, divers-coloured balls, as large as cannon-balls, fly from the sun in an easterly direction; the sun appeared to become stationary in the heavens, and looked like "a burning flame turning round a small cloud, faster in its motion than any wheel." Three balls of fire fell from the sky, to the great alarm of sundry passengers by the Buckinghamshire waggon, but did not create half the sensation caused by one descending a chimney in Lewes, and plumping down in the parlour wherein sat the children and newly-made widow of one Mr. Dubble. This intruder into the domestic circle burned the parlour wainscot, and then made its way through the ceiling into an upper room, where the defunct Dubble was laid out, finally taking its departure through the roof. The funeral was hastened, "and some of the neighbours confidently reported that the coffin which was buried was very light."

Shadowy armies were not confined to the upper regions. About sunset, on a December day, certain people of Weston, near Montgomery, saw, only four hundred paces distant, a ghostly array of horsemen riding two abreast, mounted on steeds of bay, white, grey, and black; for half an hour they watched the phantom soldiers pass by, and when they had gone, sought in vain for any traces of the hoofs of their horses on the ground over which they had ridden. About the same time a mysterious troop of horse was met on the Dorchester road by a godly minister, which troop, our prodigy chroniclers opine to have been the same troop that was seen in Wales; although they naïvely remark, "there is a rumour that the county troop was abroad that day, but we have not time now to examine it—we shall leave the reader to satisfy himself of the truth of the reports, which at present we have not time or opportunity to do." In May, 1660, a headless man clad in white appeared in Yorkshire, and was seen galloping across country, followed by an army of grey-coats, hacking and cutting a flock of sheep as they strove to escape through the gaps in the hedges, until a red-coated army came to the rescue, and drove the grey-coats away in utter rout. In Hertfordshire, a man, half white and half blood-red, was heard crying "Murder! Murder! Murder!" three times in a corn-field. St. Edmondsbury rejoiced in a mysterious brass kettle, upon which a strange inscription suddenly appeared, an inscription in which the word "Moloch" was conspicuous. As to the rest of it, we are told "what the words were, it is not convenient to relate, it being of a dangerous consequence to publish them, fearing lest indiscreet persons, and ill-affected, should make an ill-construction and application of them; besides, we are not without some jealousy lest there should be something of sorcery in it."

An Oxford student was awakened one night by a noise like the noise of geese; he arose and looked out of window, but could not see the disturbers of his rest. Returning bedwards, however, he was horrified by beholding a bishop in his lawn sleeves grovelling on the floor; he shouted out "Murder," and the spectre disappeared. Next night some of his fellow-collegians sat up with him; all of a sudden every

candle was extinguished, and the brave Oxonians fled instanter, leaving the mystery as much a mystery as before. Mr. Duncombe, of Bury, made short work of his uninvited visitors, but then they were not ghostly ones, but merely a large party of red spiders that, climbing two great posts at his door, spun a web from one to the other, and "wrapped themselves in it in two very great parcels." Mr. Duncombe laid the visitation to the account of some witch, but got rid of the spiders by lighting a straw fire under them. Mr. Martin, of Devonshire, was less fortunate. While walking in his own grounds he was attacked by a pair of ravens, and, although he kept them pretty well at bay, he took to his bed as soon as he got into the house. The ravens waylaid the servants despatched for the doctor; nevertheless the doctor came, but too late. What could a doctor do for a man when the church bell persisted in tolling for him? For three hours before Mr. Martin died did the bell itself toll his knell, ceasing directly he had drawn his last breath. A strange death, certainly. In "Bochanon" county occurred as strange a birth—a woman presenting her lord and master with a hairy creature having two heads, one above the other, and the uppermost the head of a lion. As soon as it was born this unwelcome little stranger ran up and down the house crying, "Woe, woe, woe to the world," until the disgusted father knocked it upon the head. "This is a certain truth!"

All the prodigies we have thus far recounted occurred in the provinces; but it must not be supposed that London did not enjoy its fair share of such wonders. Fiery darts flew over the City, St. Paul's was overshadowed by clouds of blood; a bright star of extraordinary dimensions, encompassed by six others of smaller size, fell in Smithfield; a fiery sword, like that seen over Rome before it was taken by the Goths, threatened Hogsden; a pillar of fire hung over Bednal Green; monstrous sturgeons were seen above bridge, and, "which is very ominous," a great "porpus" leaped into a Thames waterman's wherry. About five o'clock one morning, two credible persons living near Piccadilla, going across the field by Pall-Mall, heard a noise as though a pound of gunpowder had exploded, and looking up beheld a body of fire bigger than the moon, from which issued a stream of fire, "about a flight shot in length, and five feet in breadth." Two besom-shaped meteors swept nightly over Wood-street. Looking down upon Smithfield, a flame-coloured lion, flourishing a tail like a fox's brush, vomited clouds of yellow smoke, that gathered together and evaporated in flashes of lightning. When the quarters of seven executed men were set above the City gates a bright star shone at noon-day over Aldgate for five days in succession, and from the ghastly mementoes upon Bishopsgate seven pillars of smoke ascended.

On the 17th of April, 1661, a person coming townwards from Kentish-town met two men near the Pindar of Wakefield, who told him to look behind him; on turning, he saw in the air the apparition of the Tower, and presently afterwards beheld the whole City portrayed in the skies above him. Then it seemed to take fire, and upon the top of one of the gates appeared the semblance of a man's head on a pole. A strange apparition hovered above the White Tower, and in June the moat of the old stronghold was full of cakes of blood, lying upon the mud when the water was out, and showing through the water when the moat was full. A cloud kept passing backwards and forwards between Whitehall and the Parliament House, dropping fire upon each in turn. Over London Bridge were seen several aërial beasts, a nondescript monster, sundry male phantoms, four rainbows, and two armies.

Between seven and eight o'clock on the 21st of March, 1660, very many citizens of credit, if not of renown, became the amazed spectators of a grand transformation scene. First appeared a great cathedral with a high tower, and an oak with huge spreading branches, parted by a mountain base uppermost. Out of the centre of the last issued a devouring crocodile, which was successively transformed into a furious bull, a fierce lion rampant, a bear, and a boar. As the boar vanished the mountain split in two, each part bearing a great beast, one being an elephant with a castle on its back, the other of too doubtful an aspect to be identified, but resembling a lion more than any other creature. The elephant melted away, half a dozen men appeared and disappeared, and the lion changed into a horse and rider, coming only to give place to an open-mouthed whale. Next appeared a cardinal's hat, then a formidable army marching southwards, to meet another and join battle with it, and then without any discernible victory being won by either,

the opposing ranks became a confused cloud and so vanished.

Are our readers at all sceptical? If so, let them take warning from what befel an unbeliever: "Upon the 2nd of May, 1662, an honest and credible person, living near the Falcon, on the Bankside in Southwark, having occasion to be on the water about Æreife, late at night, did discourse with the waterman about the Book of Prodigies, saying he never could see anything of that nature which that book did make mention of, neither could he believe there was any truth in those stories. While he was thus discoursing there appeared suddenly a very great fire upon the water, which gave a very clear light; and immediately they saw two ships coming very near them, and were sorely afraid that they should have been boarded by them, and thereof the waterman did bestir himself to get out of the way, but his boat was fast. He thought at first he was aground; but finding it was not so, he attempted again to row, but could not make his boat stir. The ships now being very near them, one of them was turned into the likeness of a very tall man, about twenty feet high. Upon this, the person in the boat, being extremely affrighted, fell to praying, and immediately the appearance stood still, and was turned in on one side. They being very near it, and looking upon it about half an hour, precisely discerned the form of its countenance. At length they plainly saw fire come out of its belly, and then it moved towards the Bankside, and there consumed away as if it had been a barrel of pitch." Meanwhile the other ship had taken the shape of a castle, and it was not until both had disappeared that the waterman was able to move his boat, and convey his converted fare to his destination.

The circulators of these Munchausenisms certainly intended their readers to believe in them; whether they believed in them themselves we more than doubt. They wished to inspire their more ignorant fellows with the belief that the day of their triumph was at hand, and that these prodigies were so many signs of the good time speedily coming. Probably they thought such pious frauds no frauds at all, and had no hesitation, when their own invention failed, in having such things manufactured to order; just as dealers in articles of the sort now obtain any number of anecdotes of angelic infants and stupendously pious youngsters. It is strange, perhaps, that such stories should emanate from folks who condemned dramatic and literary fictions as ungodly, and who were never weary of reproaching their adversaries with encouraging vain superstitions. Still we may hardly halloo. When a popular religious paper tells of a poor charwoman praying to be kept from the world, and soon afterwards losing her hand by an accident, thereby being made incapable of her usual work, and compelled to retire into an obscure garret, and live on the voluntary contributions of the charitable, and heads the story, Prayer Answered, it is plain we ourselves are not yet quite out of the wood, and therefore not entitled to laugh at similar freaks on the part of our ancestors.

GARDENING AT LILLE.

In early summer, the rhythm of the railway train from Calais to Lille beats pleasant music, though somewhat monotonous—a pastorale in A flat, imbued throughout with quiet sweetness, to be marked "dolce" if arranged for the piano. To my mind, it nearly marked the measure of Haydn's "With verdure clad the fields appear, Delightful to the ravish'd sight," which I involuntarily kept humming to myself, as when one is haunted by the ghost of a tune. But it really is a well-sustained movement, allegro moderato, with ever-recurring themes (almost amounting to a refrain) of emerald pastures, lowing herds, slow-creeping streams, tufted pollards, tall elms, sometimes clustered into clumps, sometimes ranged in rectilinear rows, hedgeless fields of corn coming into ear, and market-gardens outspread before the towns and villages. Such is the burden of the song—the hymn of labour which man addresses to a bountiful Providence. The occasional fioriture interspersed along its current, are patches of lilac-flowered poppies (grown to make salad-oil from their seed), sweet-scented areas of blossomed beans, and white lilies floating in every pool and river. The further you advance, the more cheerfully you find the earth to be singing with gladness. On quitting the main line of rail in order to take that which leads into the city, the locomotive makes a long ad libitum cadenza, the train meanwhile counting a pause. The gap in the fortifications by which it enters Lille is the double bar which closes the passage. The whole strain has not been long enough to

tire, but quite long enough to make you glad to listen to something new.

Many people are likely to pass through Lille this season, on their holiday trip; for Lille is on the way to the Rhine and divers other pleasant places. If fond of gardening, they may halt there with advantage for half a day or so. Lille can show gardens untouched by the ruin which has devasted those of Paris. Even supposing the poor Parc Monçeaux put to rights again, who can forget that on *that* velvet sward so many men were fusillés, beneath that other smooth turf so many more were buried, and though it is said they were taken away, they *may* be there still; that, on the edge of that flower-border, the wicked old woman sat down, refusing to budge further, saying that if she was to be shot, she might as well be shot *there?*—and she was shot, together with her lame husband, who begged her, by letting him hobble to the Place Vendôme, to prolong his life by the length of that halting pilgrimage. No; the gardens of Paris must still be haunted; their flowers, for a time, must owe their brightness to having been manured with human blood.

Poor Parc Monçeaux, once the trimmest of trim Parisian gardens; perhaps the most highly finished horticultural gem in Europe; over-finished even, with the smooth elaborate hardness of a Flemish still-life picture, or a bouquet of porcelain flowers! One looked at it with the same sort of wondering curiosity as is excited by Chinese carvings in ivory, or other efforts of patience that have taken years to accomplish. Give me rather a broad effective sketch by one of our landscape-gardeners, from Capability Brown downwards. But there it was, comparatively small, as one of the public walks in the centre of civilisation; which smallness tempted its managers, instead of making it picturesque, to polish it up to the highest possible pitch, with grass-plots bright as any in the Emerald Isle, the result of perpetual watering with artificial dew, and with expensive plants lavished with a profusion which was called reckless, until it was discovered that the public money might be even more recklessly spent. What say you, for instance, to a bed of caladiums, an oval guessed to be ten yards long by five yards across at the middle, costing to fill it from the most reasonable nurseryman's, not much less than fifty pounds? All that *was*. Fuit. It is only now beginning to try hard to be once more its former self.

A change, too, has come over Lille and its gardens; but happily it is a change only in name, showing the transitory nature of all things French. Lille, like most important towns, towards the close of the Second Empire, has been considerably demolished, rebuilt, and enlarged. The result, as it stands at present, is a happy combination of the new with the old, still in the way of further completion. Meanwhile, the Rue Napoléon, really a noble street, has become the Rue Nationale, the Boulevard de l'Impératrice is re-christened the Boulevard de la Liberté—O Liberty, what things have men done in thy name!—the Jardin de l'Impératrice is now the Jardin de Vauban, and the Jardin de la Reine Hortense—well, I am not quite sure that the Queen Hortense has been pushed aside to make way for any citoyen or citoyenne. The really old streets and places retain their original names; and towns in this part of France have often droll ones. Lille has a Rue des Chats Bossus, a street of hump-backed cats, while Saint Omer has a Rue de l'Ane Avengle, a blind ass street. Lille also coincides with Saint Omer and Dunkerque (though not quite to so great an extent) in lodging work-people in cellar dwellings. There are cellar shops, even cellar flower-shops, cellar restaurants, and cellar tippling-places. Doth not Maria retail eatables by platefuls, to be consumed subterraneously on the premises, if such be the true interpretation of "A la Cave Marie on donne à manger par portion?" Perhaps even this Maria, like Sterne's, may whisper to some favoured customer, "Thou shalt not leave me, Sylvio."

The Grande Place of Lille is the small, but sightly heart and centre which gives the impulse to a wide-spread circulation reaching extremities far beyond the circle of fortifications. On market-days it used to be crowded; but the erection of spacious covered markets in different parts of the town, has relieved it of all inconvenient plethora or congestion. Walk from the Grande Place up the Rue Nap—no, Nationale, and you will come to a public garden, to the right, which is a sort of preface to the other gardens. Enter; look round; and criticise.

The place is nicely kept, in respect to neatness; some of the combinations may be taken as experimental in point of taste, as all gardening must be, more or less. There is a bed of white-leaved centaury, with a broad border of Harry Hieover, a

dwarf geranium much in fashion in Paris before the war, with flowers approaching the orange nasturtium in colour. Mem. I am trying as a substitute for this centaury, both in masses and as a border, a native seaside plant, the horned poppy, Glaucium flavum or luteum, which has white, downy, deep-cut leaves, canary-yellow flowers, and a curious long seed-vessel, which gives it its name. This horned poppy, being perfectly hardy, deserves the patronage of amateurs and all whom it may concern. Collect the seed during your seaside strolls; sow in the open ground, and prick out the young plants where they are to remain.

There is a bed of double geraniums—scarlet Gloire de Nancy and pink-faced Madame Lemoinne; but they don't tell as bedding plants. In wet weather, the faded heads of flowers, brown and mouldy, remain upheld by the withered stalks, like used-up quids that had been tossed aside after exhaustion by some brave militaire. The only remedy for this is hand-picking, as soon as the flowers have lost their freshness.

There you behold a bed of pansies whose flowers, singly, are good for little or nothing—ill-shaped, ill-marked, meagre, though of a clear, honest blue—but which are pleasingly effective as a whole, because they are all the same variety, and of the same identical tint. Compare this with any collection of pansies (in which the object is to have the flowers as varied as possible), as seen from a distance, which you may remember beholding, and you will learn—though perhaps you knew it before—that mixed and parti-coloured pansies (that is, either of diverse colours in each flower, or a mixture of different self-coloured flowers in the same bed), produce no effect beyond that of a dingy patch upon the grass. To obtain from them any satisfactory result, in masses, you must combine, either in beds or in ribbons, selfs of the same identical hue.

In fact, one object in visiting gardens like this, is to study the effects of experimental combinations of vegetable hues, and to glean hints respecting horticultural contrasts—to learn what low trailing plant will make a suitable carpet and undergrowth beneath taller specimens; what foliage-border will best become what middle of flowers. Those broad patches of grey produce their effect; so do those tufts of variegated-leaved dahlias; so does that combination of india-rubber shrubs and golden-feather pyrethrum, the one above and the other below. How do you like that oval mound of glaucous-green echeveria rosettes, bordered with alternanthera, whose leaves are beginning to assume the hue of badly-pickled red cabbage? It is a floral salmagundi, and decidedly curious. What do you think of that fringe of begonias on the shady side of a clump of shrubs? How do you approve of the employment of rhubarb as an ornamental plant? Is it not too suggestive of pudding and tart, to be made conspicuous in a place like this? But as for that, you will see, in the town, angelica grown in boxes as a window plant—and a plant of dignified presence it is.

At the very entrance of the prefatory garden, you may remark both the economy and the appropriateness of doing things well on a large scale and by wholesale. No doubt, both in private and public gardens, you have seen beds and grass-plots bordered by willow branches bent into a low arch by sticking both of their ends in the ground. By planting the foot of one arch in the middle of that preceding it, they are made to overlap each other, and the border becomes continuous. It makes a neat and pretty edging, with the double disadvantage that, if the willow twigs die, they rot, and if they don't die, they grow. In either case, neatness and regularity soon disappear. Here, and in the other Lillois gardens, the walks, beds, and lawns are bordered by a similar edging; only instead of perishable or sprouting willow twigs, it is made of durable cast iron. The colour acquired by exposure to the weather is not unlike that of seasoned bark, and the knots and natural roughnesses are imitated in the castings.

This edging gives great finish to the grounds at an expense which must be moderate, considering the enormous quantity employed. In Paris, not only the Bois de Boulogne, but the Buttes Chaumont, the Parc Monceaux, and other public parks and gardens, were edged with the very same material cast in similar pattern. Miles upon miles of it must have been manufactured for that purpose. It would have been curious to calculate how many hundred thousand tons of metal were then absorbed merely in edging the promenades of Paris.

After due attention paid to our horticultural preface, on leaving it we have only to cross a road to reach the plot of garden-ground named after the Queen Hortense. A

little maiden crosses with us, a girl of the period and of the place, knitting her own stockings with such absorbed earnestness that the ball of worsted falls from her pocket unobserved, and, sticking in a bush, unrolls a clue which promises to thread the way to some Fair Rosamond's bower. We inform her of the accident; at which she gaily retraces her steps, and succeeds in rewinding her yarn untangled, before it gets broken by passing carts and donkeys. She then calmly resumes her walk and her work, evidently quite as proud of herself as the smart, long-pinafored bourgeois children, sent out to take the air with their attendant bonne.

The area laid out under the invocation of Hortense Beauharnais, is devoted to utility —in unconscious irony of that lady's life, who was supposed to have a predilection for the ornamental. It is chopped up into small patches, which might serve as schoolboys' or old pensioners' gardens, only that every plant is labelled, and you find that the object is, if not exactly botany, at least the recognition of a certain number of plants. And it is good to know the individual aspect of the vegetables which supply those easily convertible articles, poison and medicine—henbane, belladonna, bittersweet, nightshade, foxglove; the Socratic, narcotic, large, land hemlock, and the still more virulent water hemlock. It is good to know plants which may be, though they are not commonly, turned to use, and which may be, though prejudice often prevents their being eaten—good King Henry spinach and sowthistle salad, the latter, according to Evelyn, "exceedingly welcome to the late Morocco ambassador," and consumed at the present day with relish in the South of France. I fancy that watercress is the only wild salad eaten in England; on the Continent, the list is of a certain length.

One of the first things Queen Hortense presents you with is a small collection of hardy ferns. There is a Lomaria crenulata, small and pretty, which deserves extended patronage. For the rest, there they are, old familiar friends, "sitting for their pictures," as they say in jail of a new-come prisoner, to the passing public, most of whom only care to know that the common bracken (not so easy as you may think to transplant into your garden) makes a pleasant and wholesome stuffing for beds; that small fronds of the young male fern fringe the outside of a bouquet with sufficient elegance; and that charcutiers (ham-shop keepers) employ the same to set off cream-cheeses and half-salt sardines. In fact, fern-fronds are the outward and visible sign of the delicacies to be obtained in what we should call "Italian warehouses." Note that some of the names Queen Hortense has given to her ferns, have become a little antiquated, and are not according to Thomas Moore, F.L.S. Never mind that; an acquaintance with synonyms is part of an amateur's bounden duty.

Another road to cross, and yon step at once into what was the Jardin de l'Impératrice, until untoward events deprived it, or her, of that honour. For whose was the loss; the garden's or the empress's? It is now Vauban's Garden, the military genius who planned the citadel of Lille and other famous strongholds. To prevent the visitor's making any mistake about the matter, at the very entrance he is confronted by a huge bed of Mrs. Pollock geranium carpeted with blue lobelias, on whose side, facing the entrance, the name of the individual to whose memory this park has been re-consecrated, namely, J. VAUBAN, is horticulturally inscribed in giant letters, composed of sea-green asterisks of echeveria embroidered on a red-brown ground of alternanthera.

Here again we have the Parc Monçeaux style carried out with the most elaborate finish; for the town of Lille is passing rich, and willing to spend its money on what it thinks money's worth—and surely a handsome public garden may be included in that category. Workmen are encouraged to "fiddle away their time" on minutiæ that would elsewhere be disregarded. Look at that stalwart fellow in a blue linen coat, cutting the narrow grass border with his pocket-knife. He will not have one blade of grass anywhere a quarter of an inch longer than another elsewhere. Observe that border of Géant des Batailles roses, with every branch pegged down close to the ground, so that the flowers look like big red daisies peeping just above the dark green foliage. Opposite are borders of Souvenir de Malmaison and Aimée Vibert (both white roses), treated in the same way. The effect is pretty; but what endless pegging and trimming it necessitates! High keeping is spread over the place, like a mantle. Nevertheless, certain overworked points made me think of a perfectly-clipped poodle dog, with his close-shorn reins, his curly mane, and the imperial tuft at the tip of his tail.

Analogous in design and execution is

the artificial brook crossed by stepping-stones, which you cannot fancy to be a mountain stream, however hard you try. Idem of the artificial rock and cavern hung with made stalactites which close the scene, also admitting the water between stepping-stones, to aid little boys in their search after sticklebacks. Of the beds, "massifs," gaudy or grey, interspersed about the park, I would diffidently observe that they are too high, too much like puddings boiled in a mould, or cakes richly decorated by the confectioner. If you cut into them with a spade, you would expect to find them filled with mince-meat or venison pasty. At public rejoicings, the town might convert them into sausage-rolls of Garagantuan proportions.

Beyond the ci-devant Jardin de l'Impératrice, Lille has also its Bois de Boulogne, a welcome walk or drive on a summer evening. But, s'il vous plait, as my cabman says to his horse, don't neglect to be wheeled, at a walking pace, along the Esplanade, with its rows of lime-trees hung with balmy flowers. Of all town-avenue trees, give me the lime, so sweet and so wholesome. Neither the sterile elm, ever gnawed by beetle-grubs, nor the acrid horse-chestnut, shabby before summer is closed, can compete with the perfumed health-giving lime. Is not a tisane, or ptisane, of lime blossoms the most rectifying and restorative of all French herb-drinks? When the tree is cut down, does not its wood evoke sweet music when made into pianoforte keys—and played on by a cunning player?

Lille also possesses gardens not ornamental, of a kind happily not common in Great Britain, our area not being studded with fortified towns. They are in a low style of art, for they are in a hole. Lille has a citadel renowned for its strength; the strength of the citadel lies partly in its ditches, which can be filled with water in time of need; but which, when nothing presses, are dry, with only a little run of water creeping slowly along their middle. The soldiers, tired of war's alarms, seek their relief in cultivating as kitchen gardens the bottoms of these military ditches, which are enriched with sundry and divers deposits. Discarding the glories of their uniform, except their kepi and their madder-dyed pantaloons, they dig, and hoe, and plant, and weed, till the earth gives such glorious crops of vegetables as ought to make the old brick walls of the fortress smile and say, they had rather be pelted with potatoes and turnips than with cannon-balls. For the gallant gardeners, pacific virtue proves its own reward. They gain both an appetite and the means of satisfying it.

If your day at Lille is still too long, there is an ever-ready resource at hand for exploring the unknown in a foreign land, of which I often avail myself with advantage. Look out for any long-course omnibus, no matter whither it goes, for all is new to you. There are always some standing here near the Hôtel de Ville. Mount on its top; let it take you as far as it will, and then let it take you back again. The penetrative power of the omnibus is something wonderful. As Herschel sounded the heavens with his telescope, you may sound terræ incognitæ by means of your omnibus.

A welcome refuge on a rainy afternoon may be found in the picture galleries in the Hôtel de Ville. The Museum of Natural History is in the Lycée, once Imperial. Among the pictures are some good and curious originals, and not a few fair copies of world-renowned paintings. Good copies, like good engravings, are always instructive. Besides which, the visitor feels less insulted by a picture labelled, "D'après So-and-so," than by an impudent daub calling itself Titian or Raphael. The drawings and studies by masters, old and new, are deserving of a careful inspection. There are two pictures (Nos. 104 and 105), signed G. Courbet, the demolisher of the Vendôme Column. Would it surprise him if some avenger of the column were to put his foot through each of those pictures?

OLD LOVE.

The broad sword loses its glitter
As it hangs in the ancient hall,
Rusted and blunt grows the keen-edged blade,
That once so gallant a champion made,
As it gleamed from the castle wall.

The jewel loses its lustre
As it lies in its velvet nest;
Till dull and dim is the good red gold,
That showed such a royal light of old,
As it flashed from a beauty's breast.

The blue eye loses its power
As age comes creeping on;
The fair form droops from its stately grace,
The roses fly from the care-worn face,
The charm from the trembling tone.

The colour fades from the canvas,
The magic from ringing rhyme,
Now, is there a joy in this world of ours,
Riches, or glories, or hopes, or flowers,
But dies at the touch of Time?

Ay, Love in his pure serenity
Can the pitiless spell defy,
For tears cannot drown, nor absence dim,
And death itself may not conquer him,
For true love never can die.

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

IMPRISONED FOR LIFE.

At six o'clock on the morning of Thursday, the 21st of September, 1820, passers-by were surprised to see that the shutters of the shop of Christopher Bäumler, a well-to-do corn-chandler, who kept a brandy shop near St. Laurence's Church, in the Königstrasse, Nüremberg, were singularly enough still up. As Bäumler was a thrifty bustling man, who usually flung open his doors as early as four to accommodate waggoners and carters arriving for the early markets, a crowd, half curious, half alarmed, soon collected round the house. Friends and neighbours rang, but no one answered. At last some of the younger and more impetuous obtained permission of the police, and, planting a ladder, ascended and forced open a first-floor window. Some evil agency had evidently been at work, for drawers, chests, and closets had been burst open, and evidently by a robber. Evil agency, indeed, for hurrying down-stairs and going into the shop they discovered in a corner close to the door the bloody corpse of Schütz, Bäumler's only maid-servant, and in the parlour, near the stove, the corn-chandler himself, dead, with his skull crushed in.

Between two bins of meal and salt the servant was lying on her back with her head shattered, and her feet, which had no shoes on, turned towards the door. Her face and clothes, the floor, the two bins, and the wall, were sprinkled with blood. Not far from the body a small comb was picked up, and a little further on there were some fragments of another. In the very furthest corner of the parlour, which was furnished with table and benches for customers who came to drink, and between the stove and a small table, the shuddering neighbours found the body of poor Bäumler stretched on his back, the head resting on a small overturned stool. A pipe, and several small coins, lay near the body, as if the murderer had dropped them when rifling the corn-chandler's pocket, which was turned inside out, and stained red by the cruel hands that had evidently ransacked it for money and for keys. The floor, stove, and wall were covered with blood, the stool was saturated, and there were even red splashes on the vault of the ceiling nine or ten feet from the floor. It was evident to all that the murderer had attacked the corn-chandler as he sat over his beer at the stove, smoking his pipe, and killed him unawares. The drawer of a commode up-stairs was pulled out, the doors of two cupboards in an adjoining room were open, and clothes lay scattered on the floor. But the murderer must have been hurried, for several presses had not been touched, a gold repeater and several silver ornaments were left, and even in those drawers which had been opened some valuables still remained. The murderer had evidently not ventured far up-stairs, for the rooms on the second floor were in their usual state. Near the entrance door lay two newly-baked rolls.

To enable our readers the better to realise the crime that had been perpetrated, it will be necessary for us to describe the Nüremberg corn-chandler's shop more minutely. The room, lined with shelves and chests, and about sixteen feet long, was lit by a large bow window, which also admitted light to the little window of a small inner parlour. The shop door, as usual at that period in Nüremberg, was formed of two flaps that fastened back in the daytime, and were replaced by a movable glass door. A bell over the entrance was so placed as to ring whenever either the glass or the wooden door was pushed open. This mysterious murder resembled in many points the terrific murder in Ratcliffe-highway, and all Nüremberg was paralysed to think of wretches capable of such deeds being still undiscovered in their midst.

A baker, named Stiedhof, who lived near the scene of the murder, at once came forward to inform the police that Bäumler's maid had bought two half-penny rolls at his shop the evening before, at rather more than a quarter before ten. His wife remembered recognising the girl just as she was going away, and asked her if there were customers at her master's. The girl replied sulkily, vexed at being sent out so late, "Yes, there are a few fellows still there." As the girl left, the baker's wife looked out of the window into the street, and remarked to her people how deadly silent it was. It was evident from this that the murder of the girl must have taken place on her return to her master's house with the rolls, and that Bäumler must have been murdered during her absence. Bäumler did not usually close

his shop till eleven, but on the night of the murder, a chandler named Rossel, who lived opposite, looking out about a quarter to ten, saw, to his surprise, that Bäumler's door was closed. The murderer had done this on the girl's departure; he must have killed the chandler, shifted the glass door off its hinges, closed the street entrance, and waited himself to open the door for the poor girl. The bell at the door was found stuffed with paper, no doubt to muffle the sound if any neighbours should be passing. The murderer, it was proved, had stayed, ransacking the house and changing his clothes, till half-past ten, as a shoemaker named Pühlcz, who passed Bäumler's house at that hour, saw no light in the shop, but a light burning in the first floor. The most remarkable thing was, that no one in the adjoining houses had heard a scream, cry, or groan issue from Bäumler's house. Neither had two watchmen who were guarding some loaded waggons in the street close by. The wounds on the two bodies the surgeons pronounced to have been produced by blows from a hatchet, and the ribs of the man and his servant appeared to have been broken by the murderer stamping on his victims.

The persons of the town who had drank that night at Bäumler's were then examined; they all agreed in remembering a silent, black-bearded, dark man, who had smoked and drank clove brandy from six o'clock, and had remained there alone when they left about nine. They all recollected that the man was about thirty, and that he wore a dark-coloured coat and high beaver hat. He had talked in an agreeable, sensible way, to one of them, but for the greater part of the time he kept silent, his hat pressed over his eyes, his eyes fixed on the ground. He called himself a hop-merchant, and said he was waiting for a companion who had gone to the play.

Suspicion soon led to the door of a certain Paul Forster, a man recently discharged from the Schwabach bridewell, and who for several days before the murder had been observed suspiciously lurking round Bäumler's house. Forster's father was a miserably poor day-labourer, who lived with two daughters of bad character in the suburb of St. John. Forster himself resided with a woman named Margaret Preiss, at Diesbeck. On searching her house there were found two bags of money; the one containing two hundred and nine florins and twenty-one kreutzers, the other one hundred and fifty-two florins and seventeen kreutzers. As the gendarmes were conveying Forster through Fürth, a waiter of the inn came forward and identified the prisoner as a man who had come to the inn early on the morning after the murder, dressed in a dark grey cloth great-coat. He went away for an hour, then returned in a dark blue coat with a brown one rolled up under his arm. The latter coat he had requested the waiter to take care of for him for a week. The waiter was to be sure and show it to no one. The brown great-coat when examined was found in some places stained, in others soaked with blood.

The next step in Bavarian procedure was the terrible "Augenschein," or bringing together the murdered persons and the supposed criminal. Lady Duff Gordon has rendered this scene very ably from the German of the Remarkable Criminal Trials, written by that great psychological lawyer, Anselm Ritter von Feuerbach, the framer, in 1803, of the present criminal code of Bavaria, and who himself presided as judge at the trial of the wretch Forster. Forster stood between the two open coffins, with a hand on each corpse, but he betrayed no fear and no emotion.

From the very beginning nothing could be extorted from Forster. He even professed himself ignorant of why he was arrested, although from the shouts of the mob he said he had feared he was suspected of murder. He had been at Nüremberg seeking employment on the 18th, 19th, and 20th of September, and on the day the murder was committed left by the Frauen Thor for the suburb of St. John, where his father lived. He had slept in a gardener's hay-loft that night, and when the people got up at one o'clock in the morning to begin threshing, he had gone to Diesbeck, reaching there by about four P.M. the next day, the 21st. As for the bags of money, he had a tale ready devised. They were part of a treasure hidden at a spot between Fürth and Farnbach, by Xavier Beck, a jeweller, convicted of bigamy, who had been confined with him in the Schwabach bridewell.

Nevertheless, through the midst of these black lies truth was already darting keen rays. Two of the men drinking at Bäumler's on the night of the murder identified Forster as the silent guest, although he had since shaved off his thick black beard, and had had his long hair cut close. Margaret Preiss

—Forster's mistress—also gave evidence enough to hang a dozen men in any less dreamy and disputative country than Germany. He *had*, she said, returned to Diesbeck about four P.M. on the 21st. Even a murderer prides himself no doubt on being minutely truthful as to certain immaterial trifles—that consoles him. Instead of his usual old brown coat he had on a new blue one, he wore over his old trousers a new pair of large nankeen trousers, and he had a pair of new boots. He brought some money in a handkerchief which he said was not his, and which he handed her to keep, and he gave her daughter (a girl of fourteen) a Nüremberg thaler and a ducat. His feet were blistered, he seemed tired and moody, and out of spirits, and when she asked him the reason, he answered dryly, that nobody could be always cheerful. The next day he ate nothing, and still remained silent and thoughtful. The day after that, Saturday, he was arrested. When the men entered the room to apprehend him, he turned red as scarlet; but when she said, "You have been about some mischief," he merely replied, "Nay, I have done nothing."

A poor lead-pencil maker named Dörr, who lodged with old Forster and his disreputable daughters, deposed that at two A.M. on the Thursday, Paul Forster came under the cottage window at St. John, and called for his father, who was in the barn threshing. Forster's sister, Walburga, instantly jumped out of bed and fetched her father; the three then talked together at the back of the house, in a low voice, for half an hour. Walburga afterwards said her brother had gone hop-picking, and had given her a pair of boots. He had also paid his father an old debt of two or three florins. Thaler, the gardener, swore that his hay-loft was locked all night, and that Forster had not slept there the night in question.

Darker and darker grew every hour the clouds over Forster. A girl named Margaret Wölflin deposed she saw Walburga Forster bring an axe surreptitiously to Paul Forster, who was waiting for her in St. John's churchyard. On seeing Margaret notice the axe, Walburga desired her brother to take the axe to Nüremberg and get it ground. Forster cast an angry glance at witness as he left. The following morning Walburga met Margaret and told her of Bäumler's murder. She was carrying her brother's wet boots in a basket. The same day Walburga told another witness that "if things went well, she would soon have a new petticoat as well as new boots." On first searching Forster's house, the police had noticed an axe wrapped in a wet rag lying behind the stove; they afterwards found this weapon behind a stack of wood. There was a stain of blood on the handle, and Margaret Wölflin, by a certain flaw, recognised this axe as the one she had seen Walburga hand to her brother in the churchyard. On her first examination Walburga confessed that her brother had borrowed the axe for a burglary he had planned, and which he afterwards told her had been unsuccessful. On a second examination, however, being closely pressed and admonished by the judge, she confessed that her brother had said to her on the night of the murder:

"I have committed a crime. I have done a great thing. I have murdered a man! Fetch my father quickly, I am going hop-picking. You wash the axe and the boots, and take care of them for me, so that no one may think anything of the matter."

On the boots she had observed large spots, which disappeared on washing, and which she supposed must have been blood. She added, in a subsequent examination, that the silk tassels of both boots were quite glued together with blood. A grey great-coat which Forster had changed at a Jew clothes woman's at Fürth was found to be Bäumler's, and the white lining was stained with blood.

At this crisis Forster, after ruminating in the prison over the state of things, suddenly changed his tactics. He became violently truthful, requested an audience of Feuerbach, and made a confession which he said must lead to the instant detection of the murderer. The story of the suspected man ran thus:

On Monday, the 18th of September, he went from Diesbeck to Langenzenn, determined, in consequence of his misfortunes, to leave his native country, and to enlist as a soldier in Bohemia. While sitting in a melancholy mood by the roadside, near Langenzenn, two men, followed by a couple of dogs, came up to him, asked what was the matter, and, hearing his distress, expressed great interest in his fate. They told him that they were hop-merchants, of the name of Schlemmer, from Hersbruck; that they were brothers, and had rich relations in Bohemia, whither they were going with a cargo of hops, and offered to take him with them to Bohemia, where he would be sure

to find employment. They added that on the morrow of the next day (Wednesday, the day of the murder) they should be going with a hop cart into Nüremberg, where they had a cousin, a corn-chandler, of the name of Bäumler, who lived near the church of St. Laurence. On the following day, the 19th of September, he went to Nüremberg, walked up and down the street near the church of St. Laurence, inquired of a barber for Bäumler, and asked who the woman in the house might be. He was told that it was the maid. He waited in vain till six in the evening for the Schlemmers; then returned to the suburb of St. John, and slept in the shed. On the following morning, the 20th of September, he again went into the town, and after wandering about till four in the afternoon, the thought struck him that he would go and take leave of his sisters before starting for Bohemia. On this occasion his sister, Walburga, gave him an axe, with the request that he would take it to the grinder at Nüremberg, whence she would fetch it herself. At about five o'clock, as he was going with the axe to the grinder, he met the Schlemmers, who asked him to carry a letter to the post for them as quickly as possible, offering to take care of the axe in the mean time. After putting the letter into the post he returned to the spot, but did not find the Schlemmers, and passed the time in walking up and down the street, until about six o'clock, when he went into Bäumler's house, and drank some red clove brandy. At a quarter before ten, when all the other guests were gone, the Schlemmers arrived, and Bäumler greeted them as cousins. Soon after they sent Forster to wait in the Caroline-Strasse for their cart, which was coming from Fürth, drawn by two white horses. This he did; and soon after a quarter to ten, the two Schlemmers came to him, carrying a trunk between them, and one of them with a white parcel under his arm. At this moment the cart drove up with two men in it, to whom the Schlemmers said that they had had great luck; they had won the great prize. They then made him get into the cart with them. At the gate of the town they told him that as they had had such luck they should not go into Bohemia, but that, in order to show him how kindly they felt towards him, they would give him something which might assist him in his own country. They then gave him the white parcel, which one of them had under his arm, and at the same time returned the axe to him. He then went back to the suburb of St. John, and on opening the parcel found in it a great-coat, a pair of boots, a pair of trousers, and three bags of money.

Towards the close of the trial Forster must have seen, and indeed he acknowledged as much, that, in spite of his courage, obstinacy, and cunning, truth could not be overpowered by fables and evasions. His obstinate perseverance in denial must, therefore, be attributed, not merely to a hope of thus avoiding capital punishment, but also to pride. Impressed with a conviction of his own mental superiority, and ambitious of a character for dauntless courage and immovable strength of will, he was resolved not to allow the judge to gain the slightest advantage over his feelings or his understanding. If he must fall, at least he would fall like a hero. If he could not avoid the fate of a criminal, he would avoid the disgrace of a confession wrung from weakness or cowardice. Men might shudder at him, but his fearful crimes should excite wonder, not contempt. The murder of Bäumler and his maid was a crime which any common villain might commit; but to stand unmoved by all the dangers which followed the deed; to bid defiance to truth, and to the skill of the judge; to behold the most terrible sights with a steady gaze, and without one feeling of pity; to turn a deaf ear to the admonitions of conscience; to remain firm in the dreadful solitude of the cell, as well as in the presence of the court; this it was which raised him, in his own estimation, far above the common herd of criminals.

During the whole of this six hours' examination, this extraordinary man stood, without ever resting. He only once hesitated when he was cross-examined about the dress and appearance of the two fabulous hop-merchants of Hersbruck. The police, who seldom keep their minds entirely unbiassed, now began to hunt on an entirely wrong trail. They suspected that Forster had had accomplices, and searched high and low for the imaginary companions for whom Forster, in the brandy-shop, had said he was waiting. Two men had been seen under a tree on the bank of the river under the fortress at Nüremberg, where Forster was chained, and, on their pelting the soldier, he had fired at them. Forster's sister deposed to seeing some one waiting for him when he returned the axe. Moreover, it was reported by his friends that poor Bäumler had had nearly two thousand

florins stored in his house, whereas only three hundred and sixty florins were found in Forster's possession. Bavaria was dragged from north to south—even as far as Frankfort-on-the-Maine arrests were made; all friends of the murderer and his suspicious sister were examined, so were many convicts who had been his special intimates, but all this led to nothing.

It is difficult to see what more evidence could be wanted than was already in possession of the judges. Forster had been observed reconnoitring Bäumler's house before the murder; he had been identified as the man who remained in moody silence in the shop the very night of the crime; Bäumler's clothes, smeared with blood, had been found in his possession; his own sister had declared that he had confessed to her his committal of the act. The very axe (and the murderer had without doubt used an axe) that he had used had been found at his house; he had failed in proving any alibi; his boots had been seen stained with blood. Yet the German lawyers plodded on, till thirteen long examinations had given time for one thousand three hundred questions being put to the unwavering, inflexible, iron-hearted wretch. Obdurate as a Hindoo fakir, stubborn as an Indian chief, he stood for five or six hours together, without flinching or wavering. His deportment is graphically described by Feuerbach:

"All means of attack recoiled from his iron soul; neither the bloody clothes, nor the axe, nor confrontation with his sister and other witnesses could shake him. If a passing flush or paleness, or a downcast eye, occasionally betrayed surprise and embarrassment, it was but for a moment, and he quickly recovered his self-possession. When the axe was produced, his changing colour and rolling eye betrayed the fearful torture within; but his voice and his answers remained unshaken. Upon being confronted with his sister, Walburga, he seemed confused, his colour fled, and his hands trembled; but he still preserved so complete a command over himself as to look her full in the face whilst he denied the most manifest truths. During the whole special inquisition, the emotions he exhibited were those of a wild beast suddenly caught in a net, vainly seeking an outlet by which to escape from the hunters who surround him. When the judge animadverted upon his changing colour or embarrassed air, he replied with perfect truth, 'It is quite possible for an innocent man to seem more embarrassed than a guilty one; the latter knows exactly what he has done, the former feels that he cannot prove his innocence.' He concealed his obstinacy under an assumption of calmness, gentleness, and piety, as if humbly submitting to a fate he did not deserve. 'I see plainly,' said he in his last examination, 'that I cannot escape, unless the Schlemmers are taken. I have therefore nothing to do but to pray to God that he will enlighten my judges, and enable them to distinguish between guilt and innocence, between the possible and the impossible. In this case guilt and innocence touch, and I have no means of proving my innocence.' The following circumstance will give some idea of his cunning, hypocrisy, and dissimulation. During the trial, a certain John Wagner, who had formerly been in prison with him at Schwabach, was confronted with him to give evidence touching expressions which Forster had dropped concerning some scheme for future crimes. Wagner, on this occasion, accused him of stealing a pair of silk braces. Forster denied the charge, and even when the braces were produced in court and identified by Wagner, he persisted in his denial. But in the solitude of his prison, he reflected that he could turn this incident to good account, in giving an air of truth to his falsehoods respecting the murder. Accordingly, after an interval of two days, he requested an audience, appeared before the judge, with downcast looks and trembling hands, like one bowed down by shame and remorse, and confessed in a circumstantial manner that 'he had given way to the temptations of Satan, and that he had stolen Wagner's silk braces.' This confession was doubtless intended to convince the judge that one whose tender conscience could not bear even the burden of a stolen pair of braces, would be still less able to endure the remorse which must follow a double murder."

At last, on the 22nd of July, 1821, sentence was passed. Convicted of the murder of Bäumler and his maid-servant, Forster was condemned to imprisonment for life in chains. His sister, Walburga, for aiding and abetting in the murder, received twelve months in the House of Correction, and Margaret Preiss was acquitted.

In prison Forster was like a bronze statue. He said to some of his fellow-prisoners, "If ever I get into trouble again I will persist in denial till my tongue turns black, and rots in my mouth, and my body is bent double."

The rascal had known perfectly well that unless he made a voluntary confession (for torture had been abolished in Bavaria in 1806) the Bavarian law did not allow him to be put to death. The being exposed in a pillory in chains, with a placard on his breast before Bäumler's shop, in the Königstrasse, did not shake for a moment his nerves of steel.

In 1817, during his imprisonment at Schwabach, this murderer had written a sentimental autobiography, which he entitled, The Romance of my Life and Loves. It seems that, as a boy, he had hung about public-houses, running errands for the citizens who came there to play loto. He had then become a foot-boy to a Prussian baron, with whose children he used to play. Refusing to become a shoemaker, he had turned gardener, till in 1807 he was drawn in the conscription, and enrolled in a regiment of the line. He made the campaign against Austria in 1809, was taken prisoner, and ransomed himself. Dismissed on furlough, he became a tavern keeper, and was punished for theft upon his guests. Twice deserting his regiment, the incorrigible man was sentenced to run the gauntlet three times backwards and forwards past one hundred and fifty men, and to return to military service for six additional years. On the very day of his punishment he again deserted, and again received the same sentence. In 1815 he was found guilty of desertion, fraud, and conspiracy, and drummed out of the regiment. He then turned day-labourer and thief alternately, and in 1816 was tried at Nüremberg for theft and house-breaking, and sentenced to three years and six months imprisonment in the House of Correction. In consequence of his good conduct in prison, however, Forster was released at the expiration of three-fourths of his time, exactly four weeks before the murder. The hypocritical and sentimental autobiography of Forster, in spite of some faults of spelling, displayed considerable cleverness, and was stuffed with texts of Scripture.

"Several anecdotes," says Feuerbach, "for instance, the account of his childish amour with a girl of eleven, of the name of Wilhelmina, and of his stealing out of the camp at Fürth, to visit his mistress, Babette, at Nüremberg, are told with a clearness, simplicity, and truth that would do credit to many a practised pen. But by far the greater part, and especially the long diffuse preface, is written in the pompous inflated style of the worst romances. In many places he has introduced songs and poems, borrowed from the best German authors, which, according to his own account, he sang or recited, on various occasions, and which he pretends to have composed himself! His head seems to have been crammed with sentimental phrases and romantic images, which excite disgust and horror in the mouth of such a being. This tiger, who, with a hand reeking with the blood of an old man, could murder an innocent and beautiful girl, can talk 'of departed souls that hold constant communion with him;' of the 'soft murmur of the evening breezes,' and of the melting harmony of the senses, which, after his death, would inform his beloved Margaretha, that he was near her." Of his "name, which would die away in the shadow of the grave, like the echo of the songs of love;" of the "glancing of the moon beams upon the silver stream of the Pegnitz;" and of himself in his seventeenth year, as "a half-blown rose on a beautiful morning in spring." Who could have recognised the murderer Forster in the following passages? "Ah! for one thing I praise God," says he in his preface, apostrophising Margaretha; "for this, that our child, the first fruit of our love, sleeps the sleep of peace! When he was torn from me I accused Heaven, and could not understand the inscrutable ways of God, but murmured against him. But now I shed tears of joy that he is safe, and I pluck the flowers of the valley to weave fresh garlands for his grave. Oh! do you remember how I planted the forget-me-nots upon his little green grave? Then my heart knew not God, and my tears flowed in the violence of my sorrow. I thought myself the most miserable of men. I now understand things better." Passages like these—and there are many such—merely prove the utter corruption of one who, cold and hardened as he was, could use the language of the most devout piety and ape the most tender sensibility. The high principle and love of virtue, of which he boasts, were as false as his sentiment. He could not have forgotten, while writing, that he was then in prison for theft; and yet he has the shameless effrontery to write these words in his preface: "Oh! Margaretha! tell our daughter what present help in trouble is the innocence of the heart; how it inspires us with heroic strength to support the heaviest affliction." And who would not attribute the following phrase to a philosopher

rather than to a housebreaker? "I know not which best deserves the name of heroism—that courage which enables a man to conceal his woes within his own breast, in order to spare pain and sorrow to others, or that which induces him to sacrifice himself for the preservation of another."

In the fortress of Lichtenau Forster seemed never tired of talking of this Margaretha, the woman whom he had intended to marry. He had tattooed on his breast, in red letters, the words "My heart is Margaretha's." To a fellow-prisoner he said, "I have but one wish, to see my dear mistress once more, and die." In sullen silence he bore his long years of imprisonment, perhaps indulging some hope that he might eventually, by such inflexible will, tire out his judges, and procure his liberty. When a prisoner (before his solitary cell was prepared) exhorted him to confess, he replied, "Steadfastness of purpose is the chief ornament of a man! One should not easily give up life; however wretched, life is a noble thing. Believe me, comrade, whenever I look at my chains and the ball attached to them, I feel proud to think that even on my death-bed my last breath shall be drawn with courage. In my earliest days, whatever I undertook, that I did. As I said before, steadfastness and secrecy are what adorn a man." He treated his heavy chains as badges of honour, and polished them at his leisure hours till they shone like silver. During the early period of his imprisonment at Lichtenau, where the most distinguished villains enthusiastically admired and revered him, he condescended to amuse them with stories of enchanted princes and princesses, fortunate robbers, &c., to shorten their long, dreary, evening hours. But one night he suddenly declared, "Gentlemen, from this time forth, I shall tell you no more stories. I see plainly that things look ill with me, and that among the bad I am supposed to be the worst of all." One of his fellow-prisoners asked him whether any one had forbidden him to speak, or whether he had taken offence? But he answered, "No one but my own soul forbids me, and that has never counselled me amiss." Pride kept him true to his word; from that time forward he told no more stories, and answered only in monosyllables. Thus he stood alone, distinguished from the common herd of malefactors. He maintained this sullen silence for years in his solitary cell, asking nothing and uttering no complaint. He took what was offered to him, suffered anything to be taken from him, bore everything in sullen silence and with apparent calmness. He even managed to give an appearance of quiet submission to the obstinate resistance which he offered to the orders of his superiors. His pride was to prove the inflexibility of his will. Once when a task was imposed upon him he refused to do it. He was punished with lashes, but he never stirred a muscle, never uttered a groan, and returned to his cell still refusing to work. No punishment could bend him, till lighter work was substituted, and that he performed with regularity. He acted the part of innocence and piety to the last. He frequently read his hymn-book, listened to the Sunday sermons, and received the sacrament on the usual festivals. If asked about his crimes he either begged not to be questioned, told his stock story of the two hop-merchants, or blamed the Nüremberg people for railing at him as a murderer, and driving him to tell his first and only falsehood, which had led his judge to disbelieve his subsequent true narrative. Hardened as he was, however, it appears that he did not altogether escape from the pangs of a guilty conscience; he frequently sighed deeply; and once, when a lawyer well acquainted with his whole case visited him in prison, vividly represented to him the heinousness of his crime, spoke to him of the heavy burden on his conscience, far heavier to bear in silence than the weight of his chains, then proceeded to describe the bloody scene of the 20th of September, 1820, and to bring before him the victims bleeding under the axe, and trodden under his feet, the sullen countenance of the prisoner suddenly flushed scarlet, and a person present thought he saw tears in his eyes. Some months after this visit an organ was placed in the chapel of the prison, and the sacrament administered on the occasion. Forster, who had hitherto always displayed the most callous indifference, was deeply affected. Approaching the altar, supporting his chains and bullet in both arms, he trembled in every limb, tears gushed from his eyes, and his loud sobs filled the chapel. What he thought or felt, whether the notes of the organ pealed in his ear like the "Dies iræ, Dies illa," could not be discovered. When he returned to his cell he was sullen and impenetrable as before.

Forster is described as having a vulgar, heavy countenance. The lower part of his

long narrow face was of unusual length. His expression, singularly animal, revolting and hard, never changed, so that his head seemed like that of a marble statue but for two large dark prominent eyes which were filled with rage and despair, and usually fixed on the ground. That Forster, impenitent to the last, died in prison long since, there can be no doubt, but Feuerbach, in his remarkable work, does not mention his death. We leave the murderer, then, in the deepening gloom of the prison cell, and in that ominous darkness part from the doomed wretch for ever.

THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XXXV. SIMON DOES HIS OWN WORK.

In the mean time, Simon had been anxiously expecting his nephew, who strangely absented himself, instead of hastening to complete that engagement which he had almost entered into with his employer. The old man's head was now as busy with Scotch shepherds, as that of his ancient predecessor had been bewitched by the dream of multitudes of spreading trees. He wished to exterminate every peasant, and to cut down the idle woods. He wished to see herds of sleek animals grazing over his land, to have his money in large sums, and no risk about getting it.

He did not know what his nephew could mean by staying away so long, having expected the young man to return to him immediately, lest a terrible threat which had been uttered should be fulfilled without delay. Yet the weeks passed on, and Paul did not appear, while the old man chafed and fretted about his house, and roamed out into the woods, cursing his nephew and his own wretched fate, since he did not find one creature in the world whom he could trust.

Tibbie observed him from her secret hiding-place, and knew the cause of his anger; watched her opportunity, and presented herself before him. She had hung up her mandrake in a corner of the kitchen where it surveyed all her labours and her idlings. Confident in her possession of good luck, she did not fear Simon, and her shrewdness suggested the best way of dealing with her aggrieved master, who scarcely listened to her penitent speeches and professions of attachment, but seized on her offers of service with the greatest eagerness. He was in bad need of a messenger, and Tibbie was ready to go anywhere. Yes, she would go in search of Paul Finiston, though she knew very well that he had gone to Camlough. After a long day's absence, she came back with her news; Paul had gone away for his own amusement, and no one in the country seemed to know when he would return.

Simon's rage at hearing this was extreme. Tibbie slunk away out of reach till his passion was exhausted, and then, when she found him feeble and prostrate, with neither voice nor breath left, she ventured again before him, and talked as she had a mind to talk. She told him that Paul Finiston never had intended to work for him; that he had wanted to be his heir, and that was all; laughing in his sleeve while he pretended to be his servant. Of course he was now the heir, and would amuse himself as he pleased till such time as his uncle's death should put him in possession of great wealth. Fine people were courting him, because of those riches which he boasted must be his; and he reckoned on having enough to spend in his lifetime without troubling himself about laying up an increase. Having made these statements, Tibbie went back triumphantly to her kitchen, no longer to hide, but to reign as in former times. Simon was glad to have her at hand, for, his rage expended, he was feverish with new plans. He would be king in his own kingdom, and Tibbie should for the moment be his minister. Tibbie should go in search of the bailiff, so that notices of ejectment might be served without delay; and if the people refused to move, why then Simon, having cast off Paul, would prove that he could yet do business without help from his unworthy kinsman. He would hire some stout assistants, who must at least do their duty by him for a day; but longer than one day he would trust no man again.

Tibbie set off on her errand on a merry summer morning, and she went greatly out of her way to carry her news across the mountains. Con followed after her heels, but he was busy watching the squirrels in the trees, and the leverets on the heath. The world was gay for the fool, and he grew merrier and noisier as he got nearer to the clouds. He knew that he was going a visiting to his friends up in the hills.

The first house they arrived at was happy Bid's! The old woman was preparing for a ramble through the country with her basket of wares. The basket sat on the

table full of little pictures in brass frames, pin-boxes, and pin-cushions, dressing-combs, and rosary-beads, tin brooches, and glass ear-rings, besides many other valuables fit to make eyes dance at her coming. By it lay her staff. The fire was raked on the hearth in preparation for a long absence of the householder from her home; that home of which she was so proud, and which had made her old age so honourable. The place looked as clean as a new pin, and she had got a chair for a visitor, and a little stool for herself, a very tiny table, and a dresser with some crockery. Three gaudy pictures, with brazen frames, were hung round the walls, and gave the place quite a splendid look. The first was the Nativity, the second the Crucifixion, the third the Resurrection of the Lord; and these made a history, which were as Scriptures for Bid, to whom the alphabet was but a string of hieroglyphics. All these delights she had tasted and enjoyed; but Tibbie had come to tell her that the feast was at an end.

Bid herself, queen of her castle, came forward to meet the visitors, brimming full of the good-humour of hospitality. She was dressed ready for travel in the usual long grey cloak and bright scarlet kerchief, she had also a new white cap, whose borders looked as fresh round her pleasant face as a spring hedge round a garden. By such signs of luxury one could see the change in her life. Well might she smile on visiting neighbours, even though Tibbie should come amongst them. She had not much to offer to any one, besides a seat on her chair and a sight of her pictures; but to Bid's manner of thinking this was no mean entertainment.

Tibbie was presented with the chair and Con with the stool, and Bid sat down on her floor which was well-nigh as clean as a satin couch.

"There'll be a bit of a note comin' to ye, by-an-bye," said Tibbie, "but maybe ye won't be able to read it."

"Deed an' I can't," said Bid. "Ye'll tell me what'll be in it?"

"That's aisy done," said Tibbie. "Ye'll be out o' this, bag an' baggage, before this day month."

Bid, who had been so happy, turned as white as her nice clean cap.

"Anan?" she said faintly; but she knew the whole story well.

"Yer bad ways is found out," continued Tibbie, speaking loud in the pride of her office. "I wondher yer not ashamed to steal yer lan'lord's land. Ye thought to sit here free because the old man was dotin', but he's not dotin' a bit, an' he's doin' his work himsel' these days. He'll be up wid ye in a fortnit's time, an' I advise ye not to sit waitin' for him."

Poor Bid listened with meekness; she was indeed overthrown from her glory; her old hands fell lax in her lap; her very cap-border hung limp by her cheeks.

"Because, having lifted me up Thou hast cast me down." So said Bid's dim eyes, which had no thought of rebellion in their sadness. She only found, suddenly, that she could no longer be a queen. It was plain that the Lord had not loved her in her pride.

"It's all right, ma'am," she said, plucking up her spirits; "on'y there's wan thing I would ax ye. Would a small trifle o' rent be like to make a differ? The basket has done beautiful wid me, an' by manes o' the pinch of hunger I could save up a little somethin'."

"Sorra bit o' differ," said Tibbie. "Simon wants the lan'. There's gran' rich cattle fellas comin' to the hills; an' it's not the likes o' you that's goin' to stan' in the road o' sheep an' fat bullocks. I'm thinkin' Simon's tired o' gettin' his money in ha'pence an' pence. But I'm too long talkin' to ye; I must be off to the widow Kearney's."

At the sound of her friend's name the expression of Bid's meek face was changed. A look of lively terror came into her eyes.

"The Kearneys!" she cried. "Oh, ye niver meant the Kearneys. Yer niver goin' to them on the same arrant ye came to me?"

"Maybe not," said Tibbie, "but I know my own business."

Con had been hovering about the cabin, looking at Bid's pictures, and hanging with rapture over the treasures in her basket. When Bid cried out "the Kearneys!" in a tone of anguish, he started and gazed at her, and his white face turned red. Then he looked at Tibbie, and his brows began to lower, and he went and took his stand by the side of Bid.

"Nan!" said the fool.

But Bid was too much afflicted to give any heed to him. Her eyes had now got fire in them, and her figure had lost its limpness. She got up and grasped her staff, and prepared to follow Tibbie.

"He threwn them out wanst," she said, "an' will he threwn them out again! What

ha' they done to Simon but pay him his heavy dues? The Lord, sure, will be even wid him wan day for the like o' this!"

"Curses does no good," said Tibbie, virtuously.

"I do not curse," said Bid, "but oh, Mary, my poor frien', it's the says'll get you now!"

Con was white again, and he listened with all his ears. He knew there was come some trouble upon his friends; knew that Bid was grieving for them, and that Tibbie had brought the grief. He handed her staff to Bid and pulled her to the door. "Nan!" he kept saying, "Nan!" But Bid wept loudly as they went along the heath.

The Kearneys saw them coming, and many smiling faces appeared at the door; but the smiles soon faded away into looks of sorrow and amazement. Who had seen Bid cry since she buried her last child?

Mrs. Kearney went out full of sympathy to meet her weeping friend.

"Oh, Mary, my poor woman!" said Bid, "it's the throuble that's come to yer door!"

Tibbie now played her part and announced the miser's will.

"It's none o' my fault," she added, sulkily, as she met the frantic eyes of the mother of many children. Mrs. Kearney threw her apron over her face and retreated into the cabin; but Nan stepped up and spoke to the bearer of evil tidings; her blue eyes flashed and she tossed her yellow locks.

"Don't come here again," she said, "or ye'll have cause to rue the day. What do we care for Simon when the Lord has give us Paul?"

"Paul, inagh!" sneered Tibbie. "It's much he cares for the likes o' you! He's dancing 'an singin' at Camlough, an' ye'll all be out o' the country afore he comes back."

"We'll not be out o' the country," said Nan. "We'll walk, if it was on our knees, till we find him an' tell our story."

"Ye needn't walk on yer knees, nor on yer head neither," said Tibbie, "for he wouldn't lift a hand for ye if he was here this very day. An' what's more, if he would, he has no more power nor you have. Simon has cast him off, an' is doin' the work hissel'."

Nan bent her fair head, and a cry went out from her lips. If Paul was taken from them, then, indeed, their case was desperate.

Bid and Mary were together weeping in the cabin, and the gossoons were on their knees comforting their mother. Con had been an eager listener to all that passed between Nan and Tibbie, his shifting gaze becoming every moment more pitiful when turned on the one, and more lowering when directed towards the other. Nan's sharp cry seemed to madden his simple brain. He turned into the cabin and seized a creepie stool, heavy enough to break a human skull. Tibbie saw him flying out of the doorway, with face of fury, and the stool swung above his head. She cried out loudly, and fled a few paces, then had just time to stoop before the "creepie" whizzed over her shoulders. Death had been very near her; she retreated hastily, and disappeared behind the rocks; while Nan laid hold of Con and dragged him into the cabin.

After this Bid and the Kearney family held counsel together as to what there was to be done in this sad strait. Paul was their only hope, and he was gone to Camlough. The only thing they could think of was that Bid should go without delay to Miss May at the old abbey. If there was any tale or tidings of him she would have it, without a doubt.

Bid took up her staff, and set out with a heavy heart. She arrived at the little gate, and walked up through the pretty rose-garden, and round the back way to the kitchen.

"Yer welcome!" said Nanny, with her fingers on her lips; "but ye'll plase to make no noise, for our young misthress is sick."

This was bad news to Bid, but she came in as invited. She was far too discreet to speak to the servants about Paul, but asked to see Miss Martha; and Bridget went to tell the old lady, who was sitting in May's room. The chamber was very silent, the blinds were all drawn down, and the figure in the bed lay with its face turned to the wall.

"It's Bid the thraveller, ma'am," whispered Bridget; "an' she wanted Misther Finiston. An' whin she couldn't see him, she's axin now for Miss May."

"You needn't have come in," said Miss Martha; "Miss May is too ill——"

"Let her come in, Aunty," said May, sitting up in her bed.

"My love, you know you are ill——"

"I have plenty of time to be ill, Aunty; I want to see old Bid."

Miss Martha was obliged to relent, and

Bid was brought into the bedroom. Miss Martha warned her not to stay too long, and went away to give some orders to Nanny.

Bid coming in, leaning on her staff, saw two hollow eyes bent on her out of a white eager face.

"You are good to come to visit me, Bid. Have you got any news for me?"

"Ill news, honey—nothin' but ill news. There's cattle comin' till the mountain, an' the poor'll have to go. For Simon's taken to mind the lan' hissel'. But it's cruel o' me to be tellin' ye this, and yer cheeks the colour they are."

"Never mind my cheeks, Bid; tell me all about it."

Bid told her the whole: how thirty families, for the first instalment, were to be turned out of house and home; how the very huts they had built of the mud, and hollowed out of the sandy cliffs, were priced so high above their heads that they could not hope to pay for them, even if they were able to live like the flowers—on air, and the dews from heaven. How some that had paid heavily for many a long year were to go now at last, no matter what they might promise. This one was bound to go, and that one was going too. At the Kearneys, Bid broke down. There was no hope for the Kearneys, and the old woman could tell no more.

"Your own little house, Bid. That will be safe enough?"

"Oh, throth!" cried Bid, tossing her head, "it's little matther about a body like me. I was thrampin' long enough, an' I can take to the thramp again. But I thought if Mr. Paul was to the fore, sich business couldn't go on."

"I think he would try to prevent it, but you know he is not here. Mr. Paul is gone to Camlough and we do not see him now."

Bid looked at the strained fevered eyes, and at the little wasted hands, that were locked so tight together; and she knew how things were going here, and that there was no hope at all.

"You see," she said, evasively, "it's goin' this ways wid Simon, that he's comin' near his death. The misers o' Tobereevil does always get a bit harder an' crueler afore their end. It's the way the curse works in them, an' the Lord on'y knows why it should be. Who it is that'll come after him there's no one now can tell, since he has cut off Misther Paul.

"Cut him off, did you say, Bid?"

"That's what I said, an' sure it's little ye need vex. On'y the poor need fret, that doesn't know who'll come over them."

"Are you sure that it is true? Then I thank Heaven. Do you think, Bid, that when the property is gone to another, and he ceases to be the heir, do you think then that the curse will let him go?"

"I'm thinkin' that it will, honey; I'm thinkin' that it will. An' sure it's bether to be a poor body wid the blessin' o' the Lord, nor be rich an' have the divil playin' thricks on ye all yer life."

"Listen to me, Bid. Can I put a great, great trust in you?"

"God sees if ye do ye'll not put it to the bad."

"I want you to go to Camlough."

"I'll go, avourneen."

"I want you to go to Camlough, and to see Mr. Paul Finiston. You will notice what he is doing, how he looks, and how he speaks. You see, Bid, it is not natural, this that has happened to him; he is not the man to go away and forget his friends. I don't understand the curse, nor how it works, but it seems to me that it puts his mind astray, so that his enemies have got power over him. He believed this himself, and I promised that I would save him. But now he is far away, and I am too weak to move. There is only one who can help me, and that is you."

"Tell me what to do," said Bid, drawing her cloak about her, and grasping her staff.

"Nothing," said May, "except to go to Camlough upon some errand of your own. Observe all you can, and come back to me with news."

Then Miss Martha returned to the room, and the old woman went away.

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THE YELLOW FLAG.

BY EDMUND YATES,

AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "NOBODY'S FORTUNE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER IV. PAULINE.

THE cold grey morning light, shining through the little window of a small bedroom in a second-rate hotel at Lymington, made its way through the aperture between the common dimity curtains, which had been purposely separated overnight, and fell upon the slumbering figure of Pauline. The poor and scanty furniture of the room, with its dingy bed-hangings, its wooden washstand, two rush-bottomed chairs, and rickety one-sided chest of drawers, all painted a pale stone-colour, were in strong contrast with the richness of colouring observable in the sleeper; observable in her jet black hair, now taken from off her face and gathered into one large coil at the back of her head, in her olive complexion, sun-embrowned indeed, but yet showing distinctly the ebb and flow of her southern blood, and in the deep orange-hued handkerchief, daintily knotted round her neck. See, now, how troubled are her slumbers, how from between her parted lips comes a long though scarcely audible moan, how the strong thin hand lying outside the coverlet clutches convulsively at nothing, and how she seems in her unrest to be struggling to free herself from the thraldom of the troublous dream, under the influence of which part of the torture suffered by her during the previous day is again pressing upon her.

Yes! the woman with the pale tear-blurred face is there once again. Once again Tom Durham stands at the carriage door, whispering to her with evident earnestness, until the guard touches him on the shoulder and the whistle shrieks, and then she bends forward and he holds her for a moment in his outspread arms and kisses her once, twice, thrice on her lips, until he is pulled aside by the porter coming to shut the door of the already moving carriage, and she falls back in an agony of grief. There is a moisture in his eyes too, such as she, Pauline, with all her experience of him, has never seen there. He is the lover of this pale-faced woman without a doubt, and therefore he must die! She will kill him herself! She will kill him with the pearl-handled knife which Gaetano, the mate of the Italian ship, gave her, telling her that all the Lombard girls wore such daggers in their garters ready for the heart of any Tedesco who might insult them, or any other girl who might prove their rival. The dagger is up-stairs, in the little bedroom at the top of the house, overlooking the Cannebière, which she shares with Mademoiselle Mathilde. She will fetch it at once, and after it has served its purpose she will carry it to the chapel of Notre Dame de la Garde, and hang it up among the votive offerings: the pictures of shipwrecks, storms, sea-fights, and surgical operations; the models of vessels, the ostrich eggs, the crutches left by cripples no longer lame, and the ends of the ropes by which men have been saved from drowning. How clearly she can see the place, and all its contents, before her now! She will leave the dagger there; as the weapon by which a traitor and an Englishman has been slain, it will not be out of place, though Père Gasselin shake his head and lift his monitory finger. She will fetch it at once! Ah, how delicious and yet how strange seem to her the smell of the pot-au-feu, and the warm aroma of the chocolate! How steep the stairs seem to have become: she will never

be able to reach the top! What is this Pierre and Jean are saying? The sea has swept away the breakwater at La Joliette, and is rapidly rushing into the town! It is here, it is in the street below! Fighting madly with the boiling waters is one man—she can catch a glimpse of his face now. Grand Dieu, it is Tom! She will save him—no, too late, he is borne swiftly past, he is——

And with a short suppressed scream she woke.

It was probably the rapping of the chambermaid at the bedroom door which dissipated Pauline's dream, and recalled her to herself, and it is certain that the chambermaid, whose quick ears caught the scream, went down-stairs more than ever impressed with terror at the "foreign person" whom she had scarcely had sufficient courage to conduct to her room on the previous evening. Notwithstanding the bizarre shape which they had assumed, these reminiscences of a portion of Pauline's past life had been so vivid, that it was with great difficulty she could clear her brain, and arrive at an idea of why she found herself in the dingy bedroom of a country inn, and of what lay before her. Sitting upon the edge of her bed with her arms crossed upon her bosom, she gradually recalled the occurrences of the previous day, and came to comprehend what had been the key-note of her dream, and who was the pale-faced woman whose presence had so disturbed her. There was, however, no time for reflection at that moment; she had been aroused in accordance with instructions given on the previous night, and there was but little time for her to dress herself and to make her way to the station, where she was to await the arrival of her husband. Her toilet completed, she hurried down-stairs, and declining to taste any of the substantial breakfast which the hearty Hampshire landlady was then engaged in discussing, and to which she invited her visitor, issued out into the broad street of the quiet old town.

Past the low-windowed shops, where the sleepy 'prentice boys were taking down the shutters, and indulging in such fragmentary conversation as could be carried on under the eyes of their masters, which they knew were bent upon them from the upper rooms; past the neat little post-office, where the click of the telegraph needles was already audible, and whence were issuing the sturdy country postmen, each with his huge well-filled leathern wallet on his back; past the yacht builder's yard, where the air was redolent of pitch and tar, and newly chipped wood, where, through the half-opened gates, could be seen the slender, tapering masts of many yachts already laid up for the season in the creek, and where a vast amount of hammering and sawing and planing was, as the neighbours thought, interminably going on. Not but what the yacht-building yard is one of the great features of the place, for were it not for the yacht owners, who first come down to give orders about the building of their vessels, then pay a visit to see how their instructions are being carried out, and finally, finding the place comfortable, tolerably accessible, and not too dear, bring their wives and families, and make it their head-quarters for the yachting season, what stranger would ever come to Lymington, what occupants would be found for its lodging-houses and hotels?

The clock struck seven as Pauline passed through the booking-office at the railway station, and stepped out on to the platform. She looked hastily round her in search for Tom Durham, but did not see him. A sudden chill fell upon her as the remembrance of her dream flashed across her mind. The next instant she was chiding herself for imagining that he would be there. There was yet half an hour before the arrival of the train by which they were to proceed to Weymouth; he would be tired by his long swim from the ship to the shore, his clothes would of course be saturated, and he would have to dry them; he would, doubtless, rest as long as he could in the place where he had found shelter, and only join her just in time to start. There was no doubt about his finding shelter somewhere, he was too clever not to do that; he was the cleverest man in all the world; it was for his talent she had chosen him from all the others years ago, it was for—and then Pauline's face fell, remembering that Tom Durham was as unscrupulous as he was clever, and that if this pale-faced woman were really anything to him he would occupy his talent in arranging how and when to meet her in secret, in planning how to obtain further sums of money from the old man whose messenger she had been.

How the thought of that woman haunted her! How her whole life seemed to have changed since she had witnessed that parting at the railway station yesterday! She felt that it would be impossible for her to hide from Tom the fact that she was

labouring under doubt and depression of some kind or other. She knew his tact and determination in quickly learning whatever he thought it behoved him to find out; and she thought it would be better to speak openly to him, to tell him what she had seen, and to ask him for some explanation. Yes, she would do that. The train was then in sight, he would no longer delay putting in an appearance on the platform, and in a few minutes they would be travelling away to soft air and lovely scenery, with more than sufficient money for their present wants, and for a time at least with rest and peace before them. Then she would tell him all, and he would doubtless reassure her, showing her how silly and jealous she had been, but forgiving her because she had suffered solely through her love for him.

By this time a number of passengers had gathered together on the platform, awaiting the arrival of the train, and Pauline passed hastily among them looking eagerly to the right and left, and, retracing her steps through the booking-office, opened the door and glanced up the street leading to the station. No sign of Tom Durham anywhere! Perhaps he had found a nearer station to a point at which he had swum ashore, and would be in the train now rapidly approaching.

The train stopped; two or three passengers alighted, and were so soon mixed up with the crowd of sailors, ship-carpenters, and farm-labourers rushing to take their seats, that Pauline could not distinguish them, but she knew Tom was not amongst them; and when she walked quickly down the line of carriages, throwing a rapid but comprehensive glance round each, she saw him not, and the train passed on and she was left once more alone upon the platform.

Then, with frowning brows and set rigid lips, Pauline commenced walking up and down, covering with her long striding footsteps, so different from her usual easy, swimming gait, exactly the same amount of space at every turn, wheeling, apparently unconsciously, at the same point, treading almost in the same prints which she had previously made, keeping her eyes steadfastly fixed on the ground, and being totally unaware of all that was passing around her. She was a clear-headed as well as a strong-willed woman, accustomed to look life and its realities boldly in the face, and, unlike the majority of her countrymen and women, swift to detect shallowness of sophistry when propounded by others, and careful never even to attempt to impose upon herself. Throughout her life, so long as she could remember, she had been in the habit of thinking out any project of importance which had arisen in her career while walking to and fro, just as she was doing then. It was, perhaps, the sameness of the action, perhaps some reminiscence of her dream still lingering in her mind, that turned her memory to the last occasion when she had taken such thoughtful exercise, and the scene, exactly as it occurred, rose before her.

The time, early morning, not much after six o'clock; the place, the Prado at Marseilles; the persons, a few belated, blue-bloused workmen hurrying to their work, a few soldiers lounging about as only soldiers always seem to lounge when they are not on duty, a limonadière with her temple deposited on the ground by her side, while she washes the sparkling tin cups in a gurgling drinking-fountain. Two or three water-carts pounding along and refreshingly sprinkling the white dusty road, two or three English grooms exercising horses, and she, Pauline Lunelle, dame du comptoir at the Restaurant du Midi, in the Cannebière, pacing up and down the Prado, and turning over in her mind a proposition, on the acceptance or rejection of which depended her future happiness or misery. That proposition was a proposition of marriage, not by any means the first that she had received. The handsome, black-eyed, black-haired, olive-skinned dame du comptoir was one of the reigning belles of the town, and the Restaurant du Midi was such a popular place of resort, that she never lacked admirers. All the breakfast-eaters, the smokers, the billiard-players, even the decorated old gentlemen who dropped in as regularly as clockwork every evening for a game of dominoes or tric-trac, paid their court to her, and in several cases this court was something more than the mere conventional hat-doffing or the few words of empty politeness whispered to her as she attended to the settlement of their accounts. Adolphe de Noailles, only a sous-lieutenant of artillery to be sure, but a man of good family, and who, it was said, was looked upon with favour by Mademoiselle Krebs, daughter of old Monsieur Krebs, the German banker, who was so rich, and who gave such splendid parties, had asked Pauline Lunelle to become his wife, had "ah-bah-d" when she talked about the difference in their posi-

tions, and had insisted that in appearance and manner she was equal to any lady in the south of France. So had Henrich Wetter, head clerk and cashier in the bank of Monsieur Krebs aforesaid, a tall, fair, lymphatic young man, who, until his acquaintance with Pauline, had thought of nothing but Vaterland and the first of exchange, but who professed himself ready to became naturalised as a Frenchman, and to take up his abode for life in Marseilles, if she would only listen to his suit. So had Frank Jenkins, attached to the British post-office, and in that capacity bringing the Indian mails from London to Marseilles, embarking them on board the Peninsular and Oriental steamer, and waiting the arrival of the return mail which carried them back to England; a big, jolly, massive creature, well known to everybody in the town as Monsieur Jenkins, or the "courrier Anglais," who had a bedroom at the Hotel de Paradis, but who spent the whole of his time at the Restaurant du Midi, drinking beer, or brandy, or absinthe, it was all the same to him, to keep the landlord "square," as he phrased it, but never taking his eyes off the dame du comptoir, and never losing an opportunity of paying her the most outrageous compliments in the most outrageous French ever heard even in that city of polyglot strangers.

If Pauline Lunelle had a tenderness for any of them, it was for the sous-lieutenant; at the Englishmen, and, indeed, at a great many others — Frenchmen, commis-voyageurs, tradesmen in the city, or clerks in the merchants' offices on the Quai—she laughed unmercifully. Not to their faces, indeed, that would have been bad for business, and Pauline throughout her life had the keenest eye to her own benefit. Her worth as a decoy-duck was so fully appreciated by Monsieur Etienne, the proprietor of the restaurant, that she had insisted upon receiving a commission on all moneys paid by those whose visits thither were unquestionably due to her attraction. But when they had retired for the night, the little top bedroom which she occupied in conjunction with Mademoiselle Mathilde would ring with laughter caused by her repetition of the sweet things which had been said to her during the evening by her admirers, and her imitations of the manner and accents in which they had been delivered. So Adolphe de Noailles had it all his own way, and Pauline had seriously debated within herself whether she should not let him run the risk of offending his family and marrying him out of hand (the disappointment to be occasioned thereby to Mademoiselle Krebs, a haughty and purse-proud young lady, being one of her keenest incentives to the act), when another character appeared upon the scene.

This was another Englishman, but in every way as different as possible to poor Mr. Jenkins; not merely speaking French like a Parisian, but salting his conversation with a vast amount of Parisian idiomatic slang, full of fun and wild practical jokes; impervious to ridicule, impossible to be put down, and spending his money in the most lavish and free-handed manner possible. This was Tom Durham, who had suddenly turned up in Marseilles, no one knew why; he had been to Malta, he said, on a "venture," and the venture had turned out favourably, and he was going back to England, and had determined to enjoy himself by the way. He was constantly at the Restaurant du Midi, paid immense attention to the dame du comptoir, and she in her turn was fascinated by his good temper, his generous ways, his strange, eccentric goings on. But Tom Durham, laughing, drinking, and spending his money, was the same cool, observant creature that he had been ever since he shipped as 'prentice on board the Gloucestershire, when he was fifteen years of age. All the time of his sojourn at the Restaurant du Midi he was carefully "taking stock," as he called it, of Pauline Lunelle. In his various schemes he had long felt the want of a female accomplice, and he thought he had at last found the person whom he had for some time been seeking. That she was worldly-wise he knew, or she would never have achieved the position which she held in Monsieur Etienne's establishment; that there was far more in her than she had ever yet given proof of, he believed, for Mr. Tom Durham was a strong believer in physiognomy, and had more than once found the study of some use to him. Sipping his lemonade and cognac and puffing at his cigar, he sat night after night, talking pleasantly with any chance acquaintance, but inwardly studying Pauline Lunelle, and when his studies were completed he had made up his mind that he saw in her a wonderful mixture of headstrong passion and calm common sense, unscrupulous, unfearful, devoted, and capable of carrying out anything, no matter what, which she had once made up her mind to perform. "A tameable tiger, in point of

fact," said Tom Durham to himself as he stepped out into the street and picked his way across the filthy gutters towards his home, "and if only kept in proper subjection, capable of being made anything of." He knew there was only one way by which Pauline could be secured, and he made up his mind to propose to her the next night.

He proposed accordingly, but Pauline begged for four and twenty hours to consider her decision, and in the early morning went out into the Prado to think it all through, and deliberately to weigh the merits of the propositions made respectively by Adolphe de Noailles and Tom Durham; the result being, that the sous-lieutenant's hopes were crushed for ever—or for fully a fortnight, when they blossomed in another direction—and that Pauline, dame du comptoir no longer, linked her fate with that of Tom Durham. Thenceforward they were all in all to each other; she had no relatives, nor, as he told her, had he ("I have not seen Alice for five years," he said to himself, "and from what I recollect of her, she was a stuck-up, strait-laced little minx, likely to look down upon my young friend, the tiger, here, and give herself airs which the tiger certainly would not understand, so as they are not likely to come together, it will be better to ignore her existence altogether"). In all his crooked schemes, and they were many and various, Pauline took her share, unflagging, indefatigable, clear in council, prompt in action, jealous of every word, of every look he gave to any other woman, at the same time the slave of his love, and the prop and mainstay of his affairs. Tom Durham himself had not that quality which he imputed to his half-sister: he certainly was not strait-laced, but his escapades, if he had any, were carefully kept in the background, and Pauline, suspicious as she was, had never felt any real ground for jealousy until she had witnessed the scene at parting at the Southampton station.

The Prado and its associations had faded out of her mind, and she was trying to picture to herself the various chances which could possibly have detained her husband, when a porter halted before her, and civilly touching his cap, asked for what train she was waiting.

"The train for Weymouth," she replied.

"For Weymouth!" echoed the porter; "the train for Weymouth has just gone."

"Yes, I know that," said Pauline, "but I was expecting some one—a gentleman—to meet me. He will probably come in time for the next."

"You will have a longish waiting bout," said the man; "next train don't come till two forty-five, nigh upon three o'clock."

"That is long," said Pauline. "And the next?"

"Only one more after that," said the porter, "eight-forty; gets into Weymouth somewhere between ten and eleven at night. You'll never think of waiting here, ma'am, for either of them! Better go into the town to one of the hotels, or have a row on the river, or something to pass the time."

"Thank you," said Pauline, to whom a sudden idea had occurred. "How far is it from here to — how do you call the place—Hurstcastle?"

"To where, ma'am? Oh, Hurst Castle; I didn't understand you, you see, at first; you didn't make two words of it. It is Hurst Castle, where the king was kept a prisoner—him as had his head cut off; and where there's a barracks and a telegraph station for the ships now?"

"Yes," she said, "exactly, that's the place: how far is it from here?"

"Well, it's about seven mile, take it altogether, but you can't drive all the way. You could have a fly to take you four miles, and he'd bring you to a boat, and he'd take you in and out down a little river through the marshes, until you came to a beach, on the other side of which the castle stands. But lor' bless me, miss, what's the use o' going at all, there's nothing to see when you get there!"

"I wish to go," said Pauline, smiling. "You see I am a foreigner, and I want to see where your British king was kept a prisoner. Can I get a fly here?"

The porter said he would find her one at once, and speedily redeemed his promise.

Through neat villages and wooded lanes Pauline was driven, until she came to a large, bare, open tract of country, on the borders of which the fly stopped, and the flyman descending handed her down some steps cut in the steep bank and into an old broad-bottomed boat, where a grizzled elderly man, with his son, were busy mending an old duck gun. They looked up with astonishment when the flyman said, "Lady wants to go down to have a look at the castle, Jack: I'll wait here, ma'am, until they bring you back."

They spread an old jacket for her in the

stern of the boat, and when she was seated, took to their oars and pulled away with a will. It was a narrow, intricate, winding course, a mere thread of shallow, sluggish water, twisting in and out among the great grey marshes fringed with tall flapping weeds; and Pauline, already overexcited and overwrought, was horribly depressed by the scene.

"Are you always plying in this boat?" she asked the old man.

"Most days, ma'am, in case we should be wanted up at the steps, there," he replied, "but night's our best time we reckon."

"Night!" she echoed. "Surely there are no passengers at night time?"

"No, ma'am, not passengers, but officers and sportsmen: gentlemen coming out gunning after the ducks and the wild-fowl," he added, seeing she looked puzzled, and pointing to a flock of birds feeding at some distance from them.

"And are you out every night?" she asked eagerly.

"Well, not every, but most nights, ma'am."

"Last night, for example?"

"Yes, miss, we was out, me and Harry here, not with any customers, but by ourselves; a main dark night it was too! but we hadn't bad sport, considering."

"Did you—did you meet any one else between this and Hurst Castle?"

"Well, no, ma'am," said the old man, with a low chuckle. "It ain't a place where one meets many people, I reckon. Besides the ducks, a heron or two was about the strangest visitors we saw last night. Now, miss, here we are at the beach; you go straight up there, and you'll find the castle just the other side. When you come back, please shape your course for that black stump you see sticking up there; tide's falling, and we shan't be able to bide where we are now, but we will meet you there."

Lightly touching the old man's arm, Pauline jumped from the boat, and rapidly ascending the sloping head, found herself, on gaining the top, close by a one-storied, whitewashed cottage, in a little bit of reclaimed land, half garden, half yard, in which was a man in his shirt-sleeves washing vegetables, with a big black retriever dog lying at his feet. Accosting him, Pauline learned that the house was the telegraph station, whence the names of the outgoing and incoming ships are telegraphed to Lloyd's for the information of their owners. In the course of further conversation the man said that the Massilia had anchored there during the night, had got her steam up and was off by daybreak; he took watch and watch with his comrade, and he turned out just in time to see her start.

Pauline thanked him and returned to the boat; but she did not speak to the old man on her return passage, and when she reached the fly which was waiting for her, she threw herself into a corner and remained buried in thought until she was deposited at the station.

A few minutes after, the train bound for Weymouth arrived. Through confusion, similar to that of the morning, she hurried along, criticising the passengers on the platform and in the carriages, and with the same vain result. The train proceeded on its way, and Pauline walked towards the hotel with the intention of getting some refreshment, which she needed. Suddenly she paused, reeled, and would have fallen, had she not leant against a wall for support. A thought like an arrow had passed through her brain—a thought which found its utterance in these words:

"It is a trick, a vile trick from first to last! He has deceived me—he never intended to meet me, to take me to Weymouth or to Guernsey! It was merely a trick to keep me occupied and to put me off while he rejoined that woman!"

DON JUAN IN BRANDENBURG.

"It was long my opinion," said Maximilian, "that the story of Don Juan of Seville and the stone-guest stood alone among popular traditions; but I have lately found a faint resemblance of it among the legends of Stendal.

"You mean the city in the Old March of Brandenburg—the Altmark, as it is called?" inquired Laurence.

"Precisely," replied Maximilian.

"Well, certainly," observed Laurence, "if you want to find a horrible story you could not go to a better place. If I recollect right, there is a pathway near one of the gates of Stendal, that at midnight is haunted by ghosts so various, that one seldom has a chance of seeing the same apparition twice. Sometimes there is a procession of spectral nuns, with Saint Catherine at the head; sometimes a troop of monks, with large books in their hands; sometimes a couple of knights on horse-

back; sometimes a skeleton hand, supposed to have belonged to a murderer, who avoided execution by suicide."

"Does the hand walk or ride?" interrupted Edgar.

"That I cannot say," said Laurence, "nor do I know the stories with which these apparitions are connected. There is, however, another spectre appertaining to the same spot, of which a more satisfactory explanation is given. This is a great he-cat, who sits on a tree, looking greedily at a coin which lies upon the ground, and springs upon any luckless wanderer who attempts to pick it up. His attacks, however, are generally confined to the male sex, and he is sometimes accompanied by a number of she-cats, who vent their spite upon trespassing females. Now it is explained that these feline apparitions are the ghosts of a spendthrift, and the ladies upon whom, no doubt, he wasted his substance."

"I wonder," remarked Edgar, "whether these various ghosts, who seem actuated by such diverse motives, ever jostle one another, or whether there is some mutual understanding that prevents a collision. An unexpected meeting of the monks, the nuns, the two horsemen, and the cats, to say nothing of the skeleton hand, would, I opine, cause something like a crash."

"You are getting beyond me," said Laurence; "I can only repeat what I have heard. Certainly, it is strange to find one narrow spot associated with superstitions scarcely traceable to one common source. Now, there is a rude image of a sheep or a lamb on St. Mary's Church, at Stendal, which probably points to something like a fact. It seems that, ages ago, a shepherd, watching his sheep while they grazed outside the city walls, was suddenly overtaken by sleep. When he awoke he found that his flock was dispersed in all directions, and though, with the assistance of his dog, he soon brought the other sheep together, one lamb was not to be moved, but remained bleating on the spot to which it had strayed. The shepherd followed the sound, and found the animal standing upon a heap of gold, silver, and precious stones, which it had scratched out of the ground with its foot. Of this treasure he possessed himself, and carried the lamb into the town, but the troublesome little animal effected its escape, and took refuge in the church, where the bleating was renewed. The shepherd regarded this as a sign that the treasure was to be devoted to the improvement of the sacred building, and caused an image of the lamb to be carved in stone in commemoration of the event."

"The shepherd, I presume, was content with the reward which virtue claims as its own," observed Edgar.

"Even the old story of the Prentice Column in Roslin Chapel, near Edinburgh, is to be found at Stendal in reference, not to a column, but to a gate. Some time in the fifteenth century, a skilful architect had built a gate at Stendal, and a few years afterwards another gate was built by one of his pupils. The work of the pupil proved to be better than that of the master, whereat the latter was so highly incensed that he slew the former with a blow of his hammer. A stone, which still exists, was raised to mark the spot where the crime was committed."

"That is the story of the Prentice Column exactly," exclaimed Edgar.

"With the slight addition," said Laurence, "that, according to popular belief, the form of a pale youth may be seen on a moonlight night, gloomily contemplating the pupil's gate, while round the battlements on the top of it floats a skeleton, armed with a hammer, with which it beats down stones from the wall."

"Nay," interposed Maximilian, "there is a similar story told in reference to another stone cross, set up at Grossmöringen, in the vicinity of Stendal, though here the cause of wrath was a bell, which an assistant had succeeded in casting, after an abortive attempt on the part of the master, and was stabbed accordingly."

"The disposition to crush rising talent is so very common," observed Laurence, "that these three stories, in spite of their similarity, probably record three separate events. Still the similarity is remarkable."

"Especially in the cases of Stendal and Grossmöringen, which are about two leagues distant from each other," remarked Maximilian. "Grossmöringen, by the way, seems always to have made a noise with its bells. A swineherd once noticing a hollow place where one of his sows had deposited her pigs, discovered that it was lined with metal. Digging deeply, he further discovered that the metal belonged to a fine church bell. No sooner was the event made known, than the bell was claimed by the authorities of the cathedral at Stendal, who built an especially large waggon, and attached thereto sixteen horses, in order to bring the

prize home. But all the men and all the horses of Stendal were insufficient to make the bell stir a single inch. So the peasants of Grossmöringen thought they would try their luck, and succeeded in taking the bell to their village, though they employed only eight horses. Nay, according to some accounts, one peasant and one horse were found enough for the operation."

"We'll let the eight horses have the benefit of that doubt," suggested Edgar.

"The bell," proceeded Maximilian, "was hung up in the village church, and now the people of Stendal grew disagreeable, and, as the fox found the grapes too sour, considered the bell of the village too loud. It was a nuisance, they declared, and moreover, a misleader, for whenever it rang, the sound seemed to come from the belfry of one of their own churches."

"Although it was two leagues off! The citizens of Stendal were quick at hearing," said Edgar.

"At all events," retorted Maximilian, "it seems to be an undisputed fact that the villagers were obliged to close the opening in the belfry that looks towards the city."

"The story of the burgomaster of Stendal and the white horse is rather curious," interrupted Laurence, "and the more so that it is not of ancient date."

"What is it?" inquired Edgar.

"They say," answered Laurence, "that in the seventeenth century many fires took place in the city, and that at last there was one which defied every effort to extinguish it. Indeed, as the available means of extinguishment were scanty, the efforts were far from prompt. Under these inauspicious circumstances, the burgomaster betook himself to prayer, and his supplications were apparently answered by the appearance of a stranger, mounted on a white horse, from which he alighted, desiring the burgomaster to take his place in the saddle, and to ride round the burning house, still continuing his prayers in silence. If he did this, the spread of the fire beyond the precincts of the house would be prevented. The counsel was followed, and the plan succeeded; but when the burgomaster dismounted the stranger had disappeared. A stable was accordingly built for the horse, and abundant provision was made for his sustenance at the expense of the city."

"On this occasion," remarked Edgar, "the citizens of Stendal seem to have been more amiable than usual. At least they showed their gratitude."

"Nay, gratitude was not their only motive," replied Laurence. "They maintained the horse, not merely because they respected, but because they considered him useful. And good use they made of him. Whenever a fire occurred, the burgomaster mounted the back of the steed, went through the process prescribed on the previous occasion, and with a like fortunate result. At last the horse died, and the whole city, plunged into mourning, resounded with the shrieks of children and the sobs of adults. To make matters worse, a fire broke out, adding terror to grief. Fortunately the burgomaster thought he might as well try whether he could not do without the horse, and stay the spreading mischief by walking round the flaming edifice, praying as before. The walk proved to be as good as the ride, and so thoroughly was the efficiency of the process established, that it was upheld, on the occasion of a fire, by successive burgomasters down to the year 1840."

"Were not the date so recent," observed Edgar, "I should suspect that some satirical rogue had invented the second part of the story, as what some people call a 'skit' upon the first. If we take the whole tale together, as of one piece, the horse looks very like a humbug; indeed, he puts me in mind of a certain bear, of whom mention is made in a well-known political work entitled the Rights of Man."

"An odd place to look for legends," sneered Laurence.

"Many years have passed since the book was in my hands," retorted Edgar; "but whether I looked for the story or not, I am pretty sure I found it there. It appears that the inhabitants of one of the Swiss cantons maintained a bear at the public expense for many years, the death of each particular bear causing a vacancy, which had to be filled with the least possible delay. The bear was not expected to do any especial good or harm, but public opinion had decided that a bear was the proper sort of animal to keep, and that the canton could not possibly thrive without one. In the course of time a difficulty arose. A bear died, and a successor was not to be found. There was a scarcity of bears such as never had been known in the land. Week after week did a council sit discussing how the frightful loss was to be repaired; but though this council resolved itself into special committees, appointed sub-committees, and offered rewards that would have drained the resources of the land, no bear was forthcoming. At last

an old councillor, who must have been very like your burgomaster, arose and called attention to the fact that, although the last bear had been dead for several months, no particular calamity had afflicted the canton beyond the annoyance of its own (he would not say foolish) fears. On this basis he moved that the offers of reward should be cancelled, and that they should continue to do without a bear, till warned by some palpable sign of their impropriety. The motion, having the unquestionable advantage of economy in its favour, was eagerly seconded, and carried unanimously; and from that time forward the public purse was never drained for the maintenance of a bear."

"These committees and sub-committees, and movers and seconders," observed Maximilian, "lead me to suspect, my good Edgar, that this Swiss legend, doubtless antique in its origin, has received some colouring from the narrator. It lacks the mediæval ring, and there is an irreverent tone about it which brings me back to the point at which I started."

"What point was that?" simultaneously inquired Laurence and Edgar.

"I stated that in this same Stendal, which we have been so largely discussing, I had discovered a similitude to the Andalusian Don Juan."

"So you did," assented Laurence; "but upon my word I had forgotten all about it."

"I also," ejaculated Edgar; "really I beg your pardon, my dear Maximilian. Tell us all about it now."

"Well," said Maximilian, looking more cheerful than for some time previously, "you must know that in the market-place of Stendal is a statue of the well-known knight, Roland, the Orlando of Ariosto."

"Stop a bit," interrupted Laurence. "Don't be too sure that the statue, because it is called Roland, has any reference to Ariosto. In the cities of the Altmark, a Roland, that is to say, the figure of a stalwart knight, is generally to be found, and all the Rolands are alike in this, that, with the exception of the one at Perleberg, which lies to the north, they wear a moustache without a beard."

"The Roland of whom *I* am speaking," proceeded Maximilian, in a less cheerful tone, "holds in his left hand a shield, adorned with the eagle of Brandenburg——"

"Or Anhalt?" suggested Laurence.

"Whichever you please," replied Maximilian, fretfully. "Do let me get on somehow. In his right hand Roland holds a long sword, intended for the sword of justice, and it is recorded that in early days malefactors were executed near the spot where he stands. Behind him is a figure of Eulenspiegel, or Owlglass, evidently intended as a monument of a visit paid to the town by that world-famed jester."

"I know what Eulenspiegel did at Stendal," interrupted Laurence.

"So do I," said Maximilian, gruffly.

"But I do not," observed Edgar, with a malicious smile. "Let Laurence tell us all about it."

"I will send you the old book recording all the adventures of Eulenspiegel. Read it to-morrow at leisure, and much pleasure may it give you; but let me get through my story now. The Roland at Stendal, though he does not seem to date further back than the beginning of the sixteenth century, has occasionally been known to relieve the monotony of his existence by turning round, or even stepping from his pedestal and taking a stroll about the streets."

"Who is supposed to have seen him perform these feats?" inquired Edgar.

"Several people, I believe," answered Maximilian, "but they generally liked to see him at a distance, and did not much care to inspect him closely."

"This seems to be a case to which the hackneyed line—'Distance lends enchantment to the view,' will apply with singular force," said Laurence.

"One citizen, however," proceeded Maximilian, "chanced on the occasion of some festival to imbibe liquor sufficient to endow him with an amount of courage such as he had never previously displayed, or probably felt. This same extemporaneous ribald took it into his head to stalk up to the statue and make mouths at it. This the magnanimous Roland endured, but when the citizen went further and insolently pitied him, because he could not take a glass, the insult was too great even for a man of stone to endure; so solemnly revolving on his feet, he turned his back on his assailant. The movement so terrified the citizen, that he became sober at once; and was never afterwards known to commit an excess. You will be greatly surprised, however, to hear that on the following morning the statue stood in its proper position, just as if nothing had happened."

"Nay, for my part," rejoined Edgar, "as I am convinced it was not the statue, but the head of the spectator that went

round, my surprise is but moderate, and I have no doubt that my views coincide with those of Laurence."

"At all events," said Maximilian, "you have here a ribald, who wantonly insults a stone statue, which, nevertheless, is sensitive enough to resent the wrong, and herein is the nucleus of the Andalusian story, though the drunken cit of the Altmark makes but a poor figure beside the lordly libertine of Seville."

"Agreed, agreed," cried Edgar, while Laurence nodded assent; "the discovery of Don Juan at Stendal is clear beyond a doubt."

"And let me add, by way of conclusion," observed Maximilian, with a condoning smile, "that thanks to kindly interruptions, you have taken a long time to find him."

LAUNCHED.

'NEATH a smiling sun and a wooing gale,
I set my feather-boats to sail,
By one, by two, by three.
One was laden with First Love's vow,
One had Fortune's flag at her prow,
One, Fame had freighted for me.

Never a weather sign I scanned,
As my gay bark left the flowery land
On a merry morn of May.
Down swept a squall of Doubt and Chance,
And wrecked on the shoal of Circumstance,
My first fair venture lay.

Gravely I looked to rigging and rope,
Ere, bathed in the lustre of golden hope,
My next to the open bore.
But fierce and treacherous rose the waves,
More ships than mine found fathomless graves,
Ere the noontide storm was o'er.

To the lulling whispers of Art and Song,
I framed my last boat true and strong,
And decked her with joyous dreams.
And sent her forth with a rosy smile,
Tingeing her silken sails the while,
Caught from the sunset's gleams.

But oh, she never returned again,
O'er the wild waste water my sad eyes strain,
In the sickness of hope deferred.
And I think sometimes, should she yet come back
With the world's slow plaudits loud on her track,
Will the grass on my grave be stirred?

CHRONICLES OF LONDON STREETS.

MARYLEBONE.

IN the year 1541, Thomas Hobson, lord of the manor of Marylebone, exchanged it with Henry the Eighth for certain church lands, and a royal manor-house was built in this reign; probably as a sort of hunting-box, as the adjoining park was full of deer. Both Mary and Elizabeth used the box as an occasional palace. In the reign of the latter queen, the keeper of "Maribone Park received a salary of twelve pounds thirteen and fourpence a year," the keeper of the house, the convent-garden, and the woods ten pounds a year, and the lieutenant of the chase the same sum. In the Board of Works account for 1582 there is a payment for standings, made both in Maribone and Hide Parks, "for the queen's majestie and the noblemen of Fraunce to see the huntinge." From Edward Fosset (to whom the park was sold by James the First) it passed to Thomas Austin, Esquire. In 1710, the manor was purchased by John Holles, Duke of Newcastle, whose only daughter and heir married Swift's friend and patron, Edward Harley, Earl of Oxford and Mortimer. The manor passed in 1734 to the second Duke of Portland, who married the only daughter and heir of the Earl of Oxford.

In Queen Elizabeth's time, in February, 1600, the Russian Ambassador and his retinue rode through the City of London to Marylebone Park (where, some years before, Babbington and his fellow-conspirators had taken refuge), and there hunted for their pleasure.

It was before this that handsome Sir Charles Blount (afterwards Earl of Devonshire) had fought the Earl of Essex in Marylebone Park, disarmed him and wounded him in the thigh. The quarrel of the two gallants had arisen on account of a chess-queen of gold, which Elizabeth had given Blount on account of his having distinguished himself in the tilt-yard. This favour the favoured man had tied on his arm with a crimson ribbon, and jealous Essex, perceiving this, had said, "Now, I perceive, every fool must have a favour." In Cromwell's time the park was settled on Colonel Thomas Harrison's regiment of dragoons for their pay, Sir John Ipsley being ranger by authority of the Protector.

In 1809, Nash, the Regent's favourite architect, prepared plans for Regent's Park and adjoining streets. The new enclosure was called the Regent's Park because the worthy Regent had expressed somewhere to somebody some anxiety to see the neighbourhood improved.

When King James sold the manor of Marylebone, he reserved the park, which, in 1646, Charles the First assigned to certain creditors as security for a debt for arms and ammunition supplied to him during the war he waged against the parliament. Cromwell, disregarding this assignment, sold the park to John Spencer, gentleman of London, for thirteen thousand two hun-

dred and fifteen pounds six shillings and eightpence, including thirteen pounds for one hundred and twenty-four deer, and seventeen hundred and seventy-four pounds eight shillings for timber, exclusive of two thousand nine hundred and seventy-six tons marked for the navy, hereafter to be floated off against the Dutch, disgracefully burnt at Chatham, or splintered and smashed by Opdam's and Van Tromp's cannon. At the Restoration, King Charles's assignment was held good, and the park, till the debt was liquidated, assigned to the original guarantees.

Marylebone Gardens stood on what is now Beaumont-street, Devonshire-street, and part of Devonshire-place. Pepys mentions the gardens as being pretty in 1668. Gay alludes to dog-fighting at Marylebone, and in his Beggars' Opera describes Captain Macheath as a frequenter of Marylebone and the chocolate-houses, "keeping too good company," as Peachum says, "ever to grow rich." In the same play the gallant captain says to one of his gang, "There will be deep play to-night at Marybone, and, consequently, money may be picked up upon the road; meet me there, and I'll give you the hint who is worth setting."

The carriage and principal entrance to the gardens was in High-street, the back opened to fields, beyond which was a narrow winding passage between garden palings, that led back into the High-street. In this passage were openings to various small gardens, intended for the recreation of cockney florists, their wives, children, and Sunday smoking visitors. They were called the French Gardens, in consequence of having been first cultivated by refugees, or, as some say, because a French chapel had once stood on their site. They were opened by a man named Gough, some time before the year 1737, and a shilling was demanded for admission, for which an equivalent was given in refreshment. Indeed, as early as 1708 there were two bowling-greens at Marylebone, one near the top of the High-street, near the manor-house, another at the back of the Rose of Normandy public-house, Bowling Green-lane, or Bowling-street, forming its southern boundary. The first was connected with the Rose Tavern, a noted gaming-house, at one time much frequented by persons of rank. Afterwards it became disreputable, and was incorporated with Marylebone Gardens.

Lady Mary Wortley alludes to the fondness of the Duke of Buckingham for this place in the line:

Some dukes at Marybone bowl time away.

The duke himself says, in one of his letters, noting the place alluded to to be Marylebone: "After I have dined (either agreeably with friends, or at worst with better company than your country neighbours), I drive away to a place of air and exercise, which some constitutions are in absolute need of; agitation of the body and diversion of the mind being a composition for health above all the skill of Hippocrates."

Pennant calls Marylebone Gardens "the place of assemblage of all the infamous sharpers of the time, to whom the Duke of Buckingham always gave a dinner at the conclusion of the season," always drinking, as Quin told Pennant, the following ominous toast:

"May as many of us as remain unhanged next spring meet here again."

The duke died in 1721. In 1718, the Marylebone bowling-greens were not illuminated, as usual, on the king's birthday, as the Kensington and Richmond Gardens held their rival illuminations instead. In 1738, a Mr. Gough enlarged the gardens, built an orchestra, and issued annual tickets, twelve shillings for the season. The ordinary admission was sixpence for the evening. The gardens were open from six till ten. In 1740, when the new room was erected, the admission was increased to one shilling. In 1771, a grand martial composition of music was performed by Mr. Lampe, in honour of Admiral Vernon's taking Carthagena. In 1743, the holders of Marylebone Garden tickets let them out at reduced prices for the evening. Ranelagh tickets could also be had at old Slaughter's Coffee House in St. Martin's-lane. In 1786, highwaymen had grown so desperate, and intercepted so many visitors on their return from the gardens, that the proprietor was obliged to have a guard of soldiers to protect the company to and from London. No person was admitted to the balls in 1748 but in full dress. In 1751, John Trusler, a cook, was sole proprietor, and a ten and sixpenny ticket admitted two persons to the ball-room. The doors opened at nine o'clock. In 1753, the gardens were enlarged by taking in the bowling-green, and lights were erected in the coach-way from Oxford-road, and also on the footpath from Cavendish-square. The fireworks that year are described as splendid. There was

a large sun at the top of a picture, a cascade, a shower of flame, grand air-balloons, and red fire. In 1756, two rooms were opened for dinner-parties. In 1788, the ball-room tickets of five shillings each admitted a gentleman and two ladies. Only twenty-five of these tickets were issued for the same evening. Mr. Trusler's son produced La Serva Padrona, the first burletta performed in the gardens. He only received the profit of the libretto books. Poor Chatterton produced a piece at Marylebone.

In 1759, the gardens were opened for breakfasts, and Miss Trusler made the cakes. In 1760, the gardens were opened on Sunday evening, after five o'clock, gratis, and visitors were accommodated with coffee, tea, and cakes. A drawing, made by Goslin, in 1700, of Marylebone House, comprises the field-gate, palace, and the surrounding walls to the south-west, including a large mansion, probably Oxford House, the receptacle of the Harleian Library. It afterwards became an academy, occupied by a Monsieur de la Place, a daughter of whom married the Reverend Mr. Fountayne, rector of North Tidworth, in Wiltshire, who afterwards carried it on.

This house, which stood on the east side of the road on the site of Devonshire-mews, Devonshire-street, New-road, was pulled down in 1791. Drawings, made by Michael Angelo Rooker, show us a mansion with two wings, a projecting porch, and an enormously deep dormer roof, supported by numerous cantilevers, in the centre of which there is a very bold pediment, a shield surrounded by foliage, with labels beneath. The garden front consists of a flat face with a bay window at each end glazed in quarrils, and the wall of the whole back front is crowned by five gables. In the garden stands a hale, hearty gentleman, dressed in black, wearing a white Busby wig and a three-cornered hat. This is, possibly, the Reverend Mr. Fountayne, as he seems to be directing a gardener how to distribute some plants A third drawing exhibits the grand tesselated staircase, the balustrade of which consists of richly-carved perforated foliage. The mansion was entirely of brick, and was surmounted by a large clock and bell tower.

This Mr. Fountayne had one son, who became Dean of York, and one of his daughters, who was esteemed a great beauty, married Counsellor Hargrave. The sister of Mr. Fountayne's wife married the Reverend Mr. Dyer, brother of the author of "Grongar Hill." Mr. Fountayne, a friend of Clarke, the celebrated Greek scholar, and also of Handel, was fond of giving musical parties, and the old house boasted a beautiful saloon and gallery, especially adapted for such amusements.

One day, when Mr. Fountayne and Handel were walking together in the Marylebone Gardens, listening to the music, "Come, Mr. Fountayne," said Handel, "come, my friend, let us sit down and listen to this piece. What is your opinion of it?" "It is not worth listening to," replied the old gentleman, with a gesture of dislike; "it is poor stuff." "You are right, Mr. Fountayne—you are right," replied Handel—"it is very poor stuff. I thought so myself when I finished it." The old gentleman began to stammer out an apology, but Handel checked him, saying that the music was really bad, being hastily composed, and that his opinion was as correct as it was honest.

Mrs. Fountayne was a vain, dashing woman, extremely fond of appearing at court, for which purpose she used to borrow Lady Barrington's jewels. Her passion for display was so great that she kept a carriage, unknown to her husband, by the following unworthy manœuvre. As her husband's scholars were mostly sons of people of wealth and rank, she professed to have many favourites, whom she used to take to the play as a treat when they had behaved well, the parents gladly paying for the tickets and the carriage; but, as the tickets were presents from her friend, Mrs. Yates, her profits on the half-year enabled her to keep a carriage; as for Mrs. Yates, she was rewarded by the numerous benefit tickets disposed of by Mrs. Fountayne.

That pleasant and inveterate gossip, Nollekens Smith, describes, when a boy, being allowed by his mother one summer Sunday morning, in 1774, to stand and see the young gentlemen of Mr. Fountayne's boarding-school cross the road to church. He says: "I remember well, a summer's sun shone with full effulgence at the time, and my youthful eyes were dazzled with the various colours of the dresses of the youths, who walked two-and-two, some in pea-green, others in sky-blue, and several in the brightest scarlet; many of them wore gold-laced hats, while the flowing locks of others, at that time allowed to remain uncut at schools, fell over their shoulders."

Smith, who was born in Marylebone,

tells a good story of a consultation of physicians overheard by a boy at Mr. Fountayne's school, when a young gentleman boarder was seriously indisposed. First Doctor: "You look better." Second Doctor: "Yes, sir; I now eat suppers, and wear a double flannel jacket." And so they went on discussing each other's comforts and ailments, till the house apothecary arrived, when he was questioned by them as to what he had given. They then advised him to repeat the doses as often as he thought proper, and so the important and profound consultation ended. In Mr. Fountayne's hall there used to be a parrot, so old that its feathers were only kept on by a flannel jacket, while in very cold weather it wore a scarlet cloth coat. Poll had been so long accustomed to hear the general invitation to strangers who called to inquire after the boarders, that she learnt to relieve her mistress of that ceremony by always uttering, as soon as any one entered the door, "Do pray walk into the parlour and take a glass of wine."

The facetious George Colman, junior, author of Broad Grins, was sent to Marylebone School in 1770, preparatory to entering Westminster. He has left excellent caricatures in the Bunbury manner of the old Doctor and Mrs. Fountayne. The quiet, good-natured dominie, who did not overburden his pupils with Latin and Greek, wore a bush wig, while Mrs. Fountayne, a faded fine woman, whose hair had become of a rainbow colour from the injudicious use of infallible dyes, rejecting powder and pomatum, had erected a formidable messuage or tenement of hair upon the ground plot of her pericranium. As all illustrations of this kind are valuable to the recorder of social history, we subjoin the old wag's description:

"A towering toupee, pulled up all but by the roots, and strained over a cushion on the top of her head, formed the centre of the building; tiers of curls served for the wings, a hanging chignon behind defended her occiput like a buttress, and the whole fabric was kept tight and weather-proof, as with nails and iron cramps, by a quantity of long single and double black pins."

At a certain hour every day the old lady with the rainbow head threw over her attire a thin white linen wrapper, reaching from her throat to her ankles, mounted herself on a high stool near the fireplace, and presided over the boys' dinners, which took place in the old hall of the mansion. On batter-pudding days the boys' friends used to come to lunch. The three Miss Fountaynes, daughters of the bush wig and the rainbow head, then enlivened the family conversazione with music and conversation. The eldest sister was a little curvilinear in form. Diana, the prettiest, married a Mr. Hargrave, at the Chancery bar, an unraveller of the knots of the famous Thelusson case. It was a law of the school to talk in French, and the result was a Marylebone patois, that even the ruddy, thick-set Yorkshire footman indulged in. When relations came for a boy, the visit was always announced by this flower of the West Riding, who, thrusting his head into the school-room, bawled out:

"Measter Colman venny shurshay!"

The immortal Marylebone Volunteers of 1797 were eight hundred in number. The uniform consisted of a blue jacket, turned up with red, and blue pantaloons. The arms were kept in the workhouse; the parade ground was in George-street. The corps of Blue Bottles, as they were called, was disbanded in 1801.

In 1802, on the renewed fears of invasion, a new regiment—one thousand strong—was organised, and called the Royal York Saint Mary-le-Bone Volunteers, in compliment to the Duke of York, who resided in the parish. The uniform was a scarlet jacket trimmed with gold lace, and blue pantaloons. Nearly twenty thousand pounds had been expended on this regiment, which was composed chiefly of master tradesmen, and officered by gentlemen. The corps broke up in 1814, when seven hundred pounds—the remains of the regimental fund—were divided between the parish school and Middlesex Hospital. There is still extant a comic song describing the achievements of this gallant corps in the field. It narrates the transport of the volunteers in four horse cars to Hounslow, and the luckless misadventure of the captain, who was shot in the leg by one of his own Light Bobs.

The church of Tyburn in the reign of King John was an appanage of the priory of St. Laurence, at Blakemore, in Essex. In 1525, this priory was suppressed by Wolsey, in order to endow his college at Ipswich. On the cardinal's fall it passed to the king, and finally came into the hands of the Fossett family. In 1821, the government gave the Duke of Portland, for the presentation, land near Welbeck of the value of forty thousand pounds. In the year 1511, the minister of Marylebone received a salary of only thirteen shillings

per annum. In 1650, the minister was paid fifteen pounds per annum.

Thomas Swadlin, D.D., minister of this church, and also of St. Botolph's, Aldgate, during the Civil Wars, was a most eloquent preacher, and in consequence was imprisoned, his living was sequestered, his house plundered, and his wife and children were turned out of doors. The expelled minister lived by trading about the suburbs of London, till on the Restoration he was reinstated.

In 1723-4, Mr. Ford, curate of Marylebone, is said on a certain Sunday to have performed the following duty. He married six couples, performed two full services, churched six women, christened thirty-two children, buried thirteen corpses, and read district service over each. To crown all other absurdities and paganisms in old Marylebone Church, there was an arched opening in the centre of the organ, which contained a canvas transparency, copied by Mr. West from one of his own windows in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, and for which flimsy copy he had actually the remarkable self-confidence to charge eight hundred pounds. The parish historian does not forget to mention that, in this picture of the Angels appearing to the Shepherds, one favoured angel was especially conspicuous for having the face of a child, and the thighs of a giant. On both sides of the remarkable organ there were private boxes (called by courtesy pews) which were fitted with chairs and fireplaces. The pulpit and desk were vast pompous piles of carved mahogany. The church seats accommodated between three and four thousand persons. The first parish clerk was a poor knight of Windsor, appointed by the Duke of Portland. There is a tablet in the north wall, dated 1821, to Richard Cosway, the miniature-painter, who was originally an errand-boy at a drawing school in the Strand.

The very close and select vestry of Marylebone was attacked by the Examiner in 1828 and 1829. The chairman was Sir Thomas Baring, and one of the body was Colonel Graham, of the famous house of Fauntleroy and Company, Berners-street. It was complained that they had paid three hundred pounds to Rossi for a bas-relief for the pediment of the new church, which was never used. Also that they had removed a gilt figure of an angel playing a lyre from the organ, and substituted a crown on a cushion. The upholsterer's bill for dressing the church amounted to two thousand one hundred and fifty pounds. There was a deficiency of twenty-one thousand pounds in the accounts, making an error altogether of forty-seven thousand pounds. The parish was in debt nearly five hundred thousand pounds, when the bill to regulate the vestry went into parliament; the expenses of one grand perambulatory dinner alone amounted to four hundred and eighty-two pounds (the wine costing one hundred and twenty-one pounds, and the ribbons for cockades twenty-three pounds sixteen shillings and sixpence).

In 1774, houses in High-street, Marylebone, particularly on the west side, continued to be inhabited by families who kept their coaches, and who considered themselves as living in the country. As late as the year 1728, the Daily Journal, October the 15th, announces, first, that "many persons had arrived in London from their country house in Marylebone;" and, secondly, "that the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole comes to town this day from Chelsea." In 1774, the south and east ends of Queen Anne and Marylebone-streets were unbuilt, and the space consisted only of green fields to the west corner of Tottenham Court-road, and thence to the extreme of High-street, Marylebone Gardens, Marylebone Basin, and another pond called Cockney Ladle. The Rose of Normandy, a public-house on the east side of the High-street of Marylebone, is supposed to be two hundred years old. It was formerly a detached house with a bowling-green at the back. In 1659, it is described as surrounded with a brick wall and fruit-trees, and being two hundred and four paces long. The bowling-green, one hundred and twelve paces one way, three hundred and eighty-eight another, was double set with fine quickset hedges, cut into battlements. The entrance to the house was by descending steps, as the street had been raised. The house, till lately, preserved its original form; the staircase was old. Williams's Farm stood about a quarter of a mile south. It boasted a room with some stained glass in the windows, and called "Queen Elizabeth's kitchen." Returning and recrossing the New-road, after passing the back of Marylebone Gardens, you came to the north side of Cavendish-square, then enclosed by a dwarf brick wall and a heavy wooden railing. Harley Fields was where Whitfield preached. Kendall's Farm, where Mr. J. T. Smith describes seeing eight or ten immense hay-ricks in a row, stood on

the site of part of Osnaburgh-street, nearly opposite the Green Man, originally called the Farthing Pie House.

THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XXXVI. PAUL AT CAMLOUGH.

SUMMER was very lovely at Camlough; bowery foliage clothed the mountain-sides with softness, and in the hollow the swards were brilliant with flowers; the castle gleamed out of a mantle of flowering bloom, and terraces girdled it with garlands as of fire caught from the sun. The gardens were hived with sweets, the trees heavy with perfumes that crept up into their boughs. The birds sang in chorus, the sea made a delicate music, and the peaks of the upper mountains crowned the valley with a sapphire crown.

Sir John had ceased to be uneasy about his unruly daughter. His head was full of things more important. He knew she was safe, and that the best way to manage her was to let her have her own way. But the mother could not so easily content herself; had grown more wretched every day that her child stayed away from her, could not sleep at night nor rest by day. Her daughter's indifference was eating away her life. There was no peace about Lady Archbold; her dark hollow eyes still glowed with restless passion; but her haughtiness had broken up into querulousness. She was too feverish for occupation, and always at odds with Time for not quickening his lagging steps. She did not care for reading, for there was no story so interesting or so pitiful to her as her own. She looked into her past life by that envious and fitful light which such minds will fling backward upon joys from which they scorned to draw much sweetness while they lived. Why had the world failed her, having for so many years been her slave? Why had pride ceased to charm, and the only love she coveted been denied her? Why had poverty threatened to pinch her with unknown wants, while bitterness and reproach must be her only solace in the trial? These were the hard problems which Lady Archbold had got to solve.

She walked with weakly steps about her room, but nobody had any idea that her life was nearly spent. Partly deceived by pride that would not complain, partly by rouge and pearl-powder, Sir John had no suspicion of the intensity of her suffering, or of the havoc it had made. On every one of these summer days her maid dressed her with infinite pains, arranging laces and satins, flowers and jewellery, as carefully as if her mistress had been a young belle going to court for the first time. On her face there were the red and white that simulated health, and her hair was not suffered to lose the rare blue-black for which the tresses of Lady Archbold had been famed. She thought that when her child returned she should not see the changes which grief and disease had wrought upon her mother. Every day the poor lady sat in a chair filled with cushions, which was placed on the sward at a sunny side of the terrace, a lap-dog on her knees which she did not caress, by her side books which she never opened, fancy-work untouched, and a heap of fresh roses which she crushed to an early death in her hot fingers. Here she sat, watching for one who would not come, and here she still sat when Katherine at length appeared riding out of the distance with Paul by her side. The mother could not bear the sight which she had so passionately longed to see. She fainted in her chair, and had to be carried to her room.

Sir John was right glad to welcome Paul. In his economic fit he had lately denied himself the pleasures of hospitality, being a man who could not choose to invite his friends to bear him company, unless he surprised them with the most costly entertainments. But he was now thoroughly tired of loneliness at Camlough, and pleased to see a man coming to share it. He had heard something of Paul, and felt an interest in him; thought him a fine young fellow, who would be a pleasant kind of neighbour, and likely to work some changes which were needed in the country.

For the first few hours after his arrival, Paul was in high spirits, and won golden opinions from Sir John. He was pleased with all he saw, pleased to get rid of Katherine, and to know that to-morrow he should return without her to Monasterlea. Above all else he was glad to find himself happy. Miss Archbold played hostess, as her mother was not well enough to appear. Her father praised her looks, declaring that the air of Monasterlea had done her good; did not reproach her, or remark in any way upon the manner in which she had chosen to leave her home. The only thing that clouded Sir John's enjoyment was

Paul's determination to return the next day whence he had come. No persuasion would induce him to think of remaining longer than this one night. The master of Camlough was vexed at his obstinacy, but Katherine said carelessly to her father as she left the dinner-table: "Oh, do not trouble about it; believe me he will stay!"

After dinner, Katherine, her father, and Paul set out for a ride about the estate in the long soft light of the early summer evening, so that Paul might make the most of the few hours at Camlough. The excursion was a pleasant one, till on their returning homeward in the dusk, a wild-looking man flung himself suddenly before Paul's horse, throwing up his arms and uttering curses upon the whole race of the Finistons. Paul, always sensitive to the feelings of the poor towards himself, started with a great shock, and urged on his horse past this evil-wisher, who seemed to have started out of the furze-bushes to banish his contentment. Sir John lingered behind, and after some parleying with the wayfarer, rode after his visitor, and rejoined him with a grave countenance.

"I am sorry to hear this," he said; "I have learned from the man that Simon Finiston is evicting the people."

"*Is* evicting?" asked Paul, in amazement.

"Yes. This very day; the man says so. His own wife and children are among a hundred who have been turned out, without notice, upon the hills. He was working elsewhere, and has been running all day on his way to Tobereevil. This is bad indeed. I had hoped you might have had influence to prevent such iniquities."

Now this was many weeks before the real evictions took place at Tobereevil; but here was one of the many occasions on which rumour declares that a thing has actually occurred long before it is possible that it can have happened. A whisper of Simon's intention had blown over the mountains, and taken the shape of the tragic story which Sir John now told to Paul.

A dark flush overspread the young man's face, and his head sunk on his breast. He seemed stunned by this news, the truth of which he never thought of doubting, and did not speak again until they arrived at the castle door. By that time the stunned feeling had left him, and his mind was in a flame. This iniquity had been done under his very eyes, and he had not seen it. He had been warned, and had not striven against the danger. His weakness in temporising with the miser at that last interview now appeared to him as a crime of the darkest hue. His cowardice had wrought the evil, and the sin was on his head.

Not all Sir John's polite efforts, not all Katherine's fascinating attentions, could restore to Paul the good spirits which he had enjoyed only an hour ago. He said good-night to his entertainers while it was yet early, and retired to the chamber which was prepared for him. When there, however, he did not go to rest, but walked feverishly about the room, thinking on his own weakness and on the sad case of the poor, and loading himself with the bitterest reproaches. When at last he flung himself on his bed he was ill in mind and body; and when morning came the guest was found unable to leave his room.

Thus began a fever which wasted Paul's strength for two or three weeks. Katherine was in great dismay, so much so that her father was surprised in a great degree, never having seen her show feeling for any one before. His concern as to the sick man was increased by this anxiety of his daughter. He agreed to all her arrangements, sent for the country doctor who attended to his own gout, and who lived on the western side of the Golden Mountain, inviting this gentleman to spend a fortnight at the castle. To the servants and out-door retainers it was merely said that the guest had got a cold. This was Katherine's wish, so Sir John made a point of it, though he could not understand it; and every care was taken to prevent a rumour of serious illness getting abroad. Katherine's old nurse sat by Paul's bedside night and day, and Katherine herself often stole in and sat motionless behind the curtains, with looks so pale and distracted that no one could have any doubt but that the patient's life was at least as dear to her as her own. And it was understood that Miss Archbold was engaged to Mr. Finiston.

At last, after much suffering, Paul was able to rise from his bed. He was very weak in body and mind, but this was to be expected for a time. Sir John gave him his arm as he walked up and down the lawn, and Katherine waited on him with dainties. But as the invigorating days of early summer passed over his head, and his body became strengthened, it was found very strangely that his mind did not regain its natural balance. His memory was a blank, his thoughts could not fix themselves on

anything for more than an instant. It was some time before Sir John could persuade himself that this failure of mental powers was so complete and unvarying as it proved itself to be. There were moments when Paul seemed dimly conscious of an extraordinary change within himself, and struggled to shake off the cloud which had settled on his brain, to remember whence he had come, and how he had brought himself to Camlough. But as days went by even this slight effort became too much for him. The past dropped away from him and left him at least in peace. He was placid and calm, sometimes silent for long hours; sometimes talking with curious simplicity of the things around him. He shrank from society, spending his time roving aimlessly through the hills and little glens, or losing himself among the high green walls of the beech alleys. Lady Archbold, who had recovered from the attack of illness which joy had brought upon her, pronounced Paul a simpleton, and wondered why Katherine had brought him to the place; but Sir John rebuked her for so rash a judgment.

"You do not understand, my dear. He came here as intelligent a young man as could be found. This is only the effect of illness, and will pass away. For Katherine's sake we must be patient with him."

Lady Archbold refused to believe in the engagement. She did not wonder that Katherine should have bewitched him away from May, but she looked on Paul as a beggar as well as a simpleton. Sir John considered that it was time to change her mind, and took her to walk with him down the terraces in the glow of the setting sun, while two peacocks strutted behind them with their magnificent tails spread.

"Do you not notice how Katherine is altered?" said Sir John. "Her heart is engaged at last, and for that we must be thankful. A worthy affection will make her all that we can desire."

"I had no idea you were so exceedingly unworldly," answered his wife.

"I do not pretend to be altogether unworldly. I could not afford it now. But this thing is fortunate from a worldly point of view."

"Fortunate!"

"My love, do not publish our conversation. I know a good deal of the history of Tobereevil. Its owners have been hoarding treasure for over three hundred years. They have spent literally nothing. Paul Finiston is the heir—in a short time will be master; and he seems quite untainted by the besetting sin of his family. I predict a noble career for him, and I cannot but think it happy that my fortunes should be linked with his. I have not gone to seek him, nor forced my daughter's fancy. She has had her own way, as I have always allowed her to have it. If the result is satisfactory you are not to call me worldly."

After this Lady Archbold no longer called Paul a simpleton, but became anxious to see his virtues and to behold his mind restored to health; the welfare of Katherine being, as usual, her only care. Nevertheless Paul did not grow wiser nor less fantastic in his ways. He would pass hour after hour picking pebbles from the rocks and flinging them into the sea. He would sit high up in the hills, and hold converse with the sheep. The herds were half afraid of him, though they liked him, for besides his singing to the sheep they often heard him declaiming to the mountains; with head thrown back, and arms folded on his breast, addressing the unconscious cliffs in lofty language. Whilst he rambled about in this way Katherine was often seen hovering at a little distance. She followed him about like a nurse trying to guard a refractory child of whom she has some dread. She scarcely ever lost sight of, but seldom ventured to approach him. Her face had grown very white, and lost a great deal of its beauty, and her eyes had got a strangely timorous look. The people talked quite openly about Miss Archbold's engagement to a fool. She had been over hard to please, and now her heart was set on an idiot. It was wonderful to see her so meek, so absorbed in her care of one person, being never angry now, except when she heard whispers about her fool. Then she would fly into such a fury that every one fled from before her face.

When many weeks had gone past, the parents of Katherine consulted as to what steps ought to be taken in Paul's case. The doctor prescribed amusement and excitement; so the heads of the people at Camlough began to devise plans for the diversion of this demented young man.

Things were just in this state when Bid arrived at Camlough, with her basket on her arm. She hoped to tempt the maids to buy of her wares; at all events her merchandise was to be the excuse for her appearance, and coming over the lower hills that sloped towards the castle it

chanced that she met Paul face to face. She curtsied to him and nodded at him, but he never gave her a glance. The change in his looks struck fear to the heart of his simple friend.

"Misther Paul!" said Bid, following him, "don't you remember me?"

He stopped and gazed at her, and shook his head. "I never saw you before," he said, and walked on with his head drooped on his breast.

"Oh, Heavens! what is this!" cried Bid.

"Misther Paul!" she said, following him again, "I seen Miss May yesterday. You never forgot yer own Miss May?"

Paul turned and stared at her again, with the same blank look in his eyes. "I don't know what you mean," he said.

"Oh mother o' God! have you forgot her!" cried Bid; but Paul noticed her no more, only walked on and left her, and the old woman sat down on the heather and wept till her eyes were sore.

A milkmaid was coming over the hills with her milk-pail on her head. She stopped and looked at Bid, and asked her why she was crying. Poor Bid was too sorrowful too think of anything but the truth.

"I met Mister Paul," she said, "an' not a bit he knewn me."

"Wirra whisht, ould woman, don't you know that the man is mad?"

Now, indeed, it was Bid's turn to question; but for May's sake she remembered that she must be wise. She accepted the milkmaid's invitation to the castle, and sold a pair of blue glass ear-rings on the spot. She was brought into the kitchen, and afterwards had an invitation to the housekeeper's private room, where she disposed of all her jewellery, and was hospitably entertained. When she started to return homewards she had learned all that could be learned as to Paul's unhappy state.

As she came homeward over the mountains her head was dizzy with grief. Paul Finiston mad! How could she carry such news to May. The hope of the country was gone on the wind, but for the moment she thought May's the hardest share of the trouble.

"She'll break her bit o' a heart," said Bid. "She'll turn to the wall an' die."

When the old woman came to the end of her weary journey, and walked up the garden path, she saw the blinds were still down in the cottage at Monasterlea, and she knew that May was no better than when she had left her. So Bid crept round to the back door as before, and stepped noiselessly into the kitchen. This time Bridget had no need to put her finger on her lip, for Bid's spirits were so crushed that she was as quiet as a ghost. Miss Martha came to her presently and sent her into May's chamber.

Poor Bid had little art to break her terrible news. She told it out bluntly, in a burst of sympathetic sorrow.

"Oh, my dear," she said, "there's little use in goin' to look for Paul. He's strayin' about yon hills like a lamb that's lost its mother. He doesn't know you nor me, nor e'er a wan belongin' till him. They say he's promised in marriage to yon bould cruel hussy that took him away wid her out o' here, an' she walkin' about afther him like a cat afther a mouse. But a woman might as well marry hersel' till our poor Con at home. God sees it's the black word to come out o' my mouth to yer ear, but our cliver gintleman has no more sinse left nor a fool."

May sat up in her bed, devouring every word that fell from Bid. The old woman glanced at her fearfully, as if she feared the news would kill her on the spot.

"I knew it," said May, quietly. "I knew it was not his own will that did it. Now, Bid, I'll get well. Open that window wide, and bring me something to eat."

Bid stared at her vacantly.

"Oh, Bid dear, don't loiter. Hurry, and do what I tell you, for I have no time to lose."

Bid did as she was told, putting her wonder aside to wait for another time. She opened the window wide, and the river and the flowers looked in at May. She trotted away to the kitchen and came back with a basin of soup. Greatly amazed was Miss Martha to find May sitting up in her bed, and Bid holding a basin of soup to her mouth.

Miss Martha was very busy at this time. It was the hay-making season, and she had got to look after her labourers. So Bid stayed with May; she sat by her bedside during the long summer day, telling her stories of the pleasant summer world out of doors. She talked, just as if she had got a sick child to nurse, of how the river was laughing on the stones because the sun was trying to dry it up; but the source in the mountains was too plentiful for that. How the cock was scolding his wives because the chickens were long about

walking, and the young ducks were gone off in search of water to have a swim. Nothing sad did Bid tell to May, but every tale had life in it, and a sparkle of fun and joy.

The next evening Miss Martha found May up and dressed, and sitting at the open window.

"You see I have got well, Aunty," said the girl. "We have a great deal to do, and I can't afford to be sick."

"Thank God you are better, my darling; but what have we got to do?"

"In the first place there are all these people who are to be driven out of their homes. We must try and do something for them. There will be sick people amongst them."

Miss Martha looked grave. "I am ready to do what I can," she said. "I cannot do very much."

"Bid has gone to the mountain," said May, "to see how things are going. She will be back here in the morning with the news. And, Aunty, there is another thing—you and I have got to save Paul Finiston."

"Now, my love, forgive me, but I will not hear a word about that graceless young man. A person who behaves as he has done is never worth a thought. When your health is a little stronger, my darling, you will regain a proper spirit. Till then have patience, and do not mention the man's name."

May's face had become as white as the mountain snow. She caught the arms of her chair, and held them tightly. Some minutes passed before she spoke again.

"Aunt Martha," she then said, "you have not understood me. I will explain myself better, and you will not refuse to listen to me. Paul Finiston has lost his mind, and he is in the power of an enemy. I feel that he will never recover, never be the man God intended him to be, while he is here in this country, under the shadow of the curse which he has so feared. If he were away in some bright new country the trouble would leave him, and he might there live his life as he ought to live it. Don't believe I wish for him here that I may hear his voice and see his face, for I am a truer woman than you think me. What I ask is this—do you take Paul to France, or to Italy if you like better, and place him with good people, and leave him there to God. I will manage here during your absence, and will be happy, feeling we have tried to save him. Now you know what I mean, Aunty. Will you do this thing for the sake of your little May?"

Miss Martha jerked a tear or two out of her eye. She was impatient with herself for not feeling sterner.

"That is all very fine," she said; "but how am I to take possession of an able-bodied young man? Am I to ride to Camlough and carry him off in my pocket?"

May had no longer any smiles for her aunt's fidgety little speeches. Her eyes gazed strangely out of the window, with that fixed bleak look which they had taken when Paul was expected and did not come, like eyes that had given up seeking for the thing that could give them joy.

"I do not know how that will be," she said; "I do not know yet."

She closed her eyes, and Miss Martha thought she slept; but she was pondering all the time over that difficult problem—how could Paul be carried out of the country and saved? She had no doubt at all that his present state was directly owing to the influence of the curse. Anxiety must have caused that sudden and mysterious illness which had left his mind a wreck. She thought of him happy and light-hearted as she had first seen him. Had he stayed in that foreign country to which an honest impulse had driven him, he would not now stand blighted in his prime. It was she who had brought him into danger, she who had kept him under the cloud, and now she must send him away from her, so that his troubles might come to an end. It was only a poor comfort for her to know that he had already forgotten her, so that it would cost him no pang if he were never to see her again. Of her own future she did not dare to think.

Miss Martha's thoughts on the subject were very different. The old lady did not quite believe in the story of Paul's loss of memory, and suspected that Katherine had bewitched him, and that he had chosen to stay at Camlough. She had not, however, the heart to thrust such opinion upon May. If the child believed him mad, why let her believe so.

Meanwhile Bid had arrived at home on the eve of a day of affliction. People were passing from one cabin to another, saying sad farewells, and mourning together over the woe that was come among them. The Kearneys were carrying their small possessions into a cave under a cliff, where they intended to live till they could sell their pig and their little bits of furniture. With

the few pounds that such sale would bring they must start by-and-bye, a sad and timid band of wanderers, to seek their fortunes or misfortunes in some unknown and dreaded town. Some others were doing likewise, thanking God as they worked, that things were not worse with them.

"Sure it's the summer sky we have over our heads," said one. "If a body must sleep on the grass, it's good to have it dhry."

"You say well," said another; "we're betther off nor the old people—heavens be their bed! What debate could me an' the baby make if the snow was blindin' our eyes and freezin' our hearts."

"The Lord wouldn't let that happen twicet," said a third.

But there were others who could not make an effort to be cheerful; the people who had their sick and their dying to provide for. What could Tim's old father, and little Bride's crippled grandmother do but die on the side of the hill? There was patient Norah in the last stage of consumption, and there was a mother of many children who had been bedridden for years. The children clung to their mother, who could not move, and moaned over the horror which the morrow was to bring to them; and the woman with the sick daughter sat with her arms round her dying child, and prayed with frantic earnestness that God would take her home before the cruel hour should come. Sympathising sufferers passed in and out of the cabins, and wept a little with one, and wept a little with another; while each would rebuke her neighbour for the despair which she felt herself.

Bundles were packed, and Sunday clothes put on. In most cases where there was a strong healthy father or brother, he had gone away already to look for work in the nearest town, or in some other part of the country. Those who were to begin their journey to-morrow, were all the weak, if not the helpless. People were dressed already for their travel, for there was no thought of sleeping on that last ever-to-be-remembered night before they left the homes that had sheltered them, never to see them more. They kept walking about, visiting each other, all the short summer night, sitting round the fires for the few dark chill hours talking over their past, or trying to predict the future. Con sat by the fire in the Kearneys' cabin, his face dark with gloom, his hands clasping his knees under his chin, his eyes roving from the red hearth to Nan, and from Nan back to the hearth. The girl was busy meanwhile making jackets for the little brothers, and cloaks for the small half-naked sisters out of every rag of stuff she could find, including the bed-clothes. The little ones sat round her, awed into unusual hush, and watching every stitch with the eyes of frightened rabbits.

"God help ye!" said a visiting neighbour, "but ye're the long wake family!"

Nan threw her head back, and stifled a groan.

"Misther Paul! Misther Paul!" she said, "thin why did you desave us?"

"Arrah whisht!" said the neighbour; "could he carcumvint the devil?"

"Mick! the daylight's comin'. Will you run an' thry if you see a sight o' Bid?"

The neighbour went out sighing.

"Well, well, well! but the obstinate hope is in that girl!"

"She ought to ha' come back," said Nan; "she ought to ha' come back."

Here Bid and the house-mother entered the cabin together. The old woman had been detained, condoling and helping in many houses on her way.

"Well!" cried Nan, springing to her feet, and dropping her work.

"The curse is down on Paul," said Bid, solemnly; "ye have ne'er a wan to look to but the Lord!"

Nan crouched on the floor and buried her face in her gown.

"Get up girl, get up! There's worse off nor you. Ye've all got yer feet undher ye, an' young blood in yer veins."

"Young enough!" wailed Nan, as a toddling child tumbled into her lap.

"Ye'll make yer mother break down," said Bid; "I looked for betther things from ye. Ye haven't the sick an' dyin' to take on yer shouldhers. Get up now an' be a woman, Nan Kearney. An' I'll show ye Katty Daly, that can't stir, an' her seven little girsheens all cryin' round her bed."

END OF THE SEVENTH VOLUME.

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SLAVES OF THE LAMP.

THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER OF **ALL THE YEAR ROUND.**

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

CONTAINING THE AMOUNT OF TWO ORDINARY NUMBERS.

CHRISTMAS, 1871. PRICE **4d.**

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THE LAMP AND ITS SLAVES.

AFTER depositing one passenger, the train went writhing out of the station; the serpentine motion and the red lamp together suggesting the idea of an enormous glowworm. The man who had alighted, who had been awakened from a doze, and was still half asleep, stood staring after it until the porter, the one other living being in the place, touched him on the arm and asked him for his ticket.

"Here it is," said the passenger, producing it. "Now where is the man?"

"What man?" asked the porter, gruffly, raising his lantern to get a better view of the stranger, and eyeing him suspiciously.

The light fell upon a tall, middle-aged man, wrapped from head to foot in a thick great-coat, and carrying a travelling-rug in one hand and a bag in the other.

"The man from Meneage," he said, shortly. "I telegraphed this morning to Mr. Stacey that I was coming down by this train, and I expected he would have sent a trap to meet me."

"Oh, you are Mr. Cameron, then?" said the porter. "Telegraph came all right, sir, but there weren't nobody to take it up to Squire Stacey; and it's plain you're strange to these parts, or you wouldn't talk about traps coming from Meneage this time of year. River's out now, sir, and there's no way of getting to Meneage but by boat."

"Do you mean to say my message didn't go to Mr. Stacey?"

"Not it," said the porter, quietly, "It's locked up in station-master's desk, that's where that is! Most of the Bridgefoot men have gone out in the fishing-smacks, and there's only two boatmen left in the place, and they were both away time your message arrived."

"But I must get to Meneage to-night," said Mr. Cameron, "if I row myself there!"

"No call for you to do that, sir," said the porter; "one of the boatmen's sure to be back by this time, and he won't mind the job if he's well paid for it, though it's rather a roughish night. We will go and try and find old Bowes. Give me your bag, sir, and come along a me."

They crossed the line, and went out into an open road, bordered on either side by pretty villas, summer residences of the rich Avonmouth tradesmen. From the eminence on which they stood they saw, climbing the cliff beneath them, the little white-washed cottages of the fishing-village perched in clumps of two and three, one above the other, until they were finally intermingled with the stone houses and the slated roofs of the business portion of the town. Above their heads were traccable the vast yet delicate proportions of that great triumph of engineering skill, the bridge from which the village takes its name, while the fitful gleams of moonlight, which from time to time struggled through the dark bank of clouds, showed the dull outline of some old three-deckers, notable ships in their day, but long since abandoned to the dry-rot and the rats.

"We are getting near the place now, sir," said the porter, as they wound down what was little better than a narrow stone ladder between the houses. "This is where our fishing people mostly live."

"So my nose informs me," said Mr. Cameron, dryly.

The porter looked at him and grinned.

"Tell 'ee that's nothing to Penzance fish-trucks in herring or pilchard season; 'tain't nice, perhaps, but it's main wholesome, I reckon, though some of 'em seems to think that 'tis better to keep the taste well washed out of their mouths. Tom Bowes is one of that sort; and here we are at his place. Hallo, Tom! Tom Bowes! rouse 'un out, Tom; here's a gentleman wants yer."

The porter stopped before a low, dingy hovel, with a thatched roof, and a tiny window, the little light procurable from which was, however, obscured by a thick glass bottle of dirty, clumsy-looking sweetmeats, and a couple of large-bowled clay pipes with crossed stems. As the man raised his lantern to the door, the light fell upon a half-effaced inscription setting forth that the shop owner was duly licensed to sell groceries, &c. "Ah, that was in his wife's lifetime, sir," said the porter, pointing to the words. "She were a hard-working woman, always trying to keep him straight, but since her death, whatever time Tom's not in the boat, he's down at the Trawling Net, or asleep here."

"Perhaps he's at the Trawling Net, now?" said Mr. Cameron. "He don't appear to hear us."

"Trawling Net's shut long since," said the porter. "I'll soon rouse 'un out, I tell 'ee. Do 'ee just kick at door while I shout, sir!"

After a series of combined kicks and roars, the door opened, and Mr. Bowes stood before them, dressed in thick trousers and a frowsy yellow shirt. He was a heavily-built, ill-looking man of about fifty, with his coarse sandy hair brought down after the old sailor fashion in a curl or love-lock on either side of his broad square forehead, with a mass of tangled beard and whiskers, and with a shifty, furtive glance in the small grey eyes which were deeply sunken in his head.

"What's this!" he cried, in a dull thick voice, stepping a pace back and raising his hand to shade his face from the glare of the porter's lamp. "What's this!" he repeated, lurching heavily forward and clinging to the door for support.

"A job, Tom, that's what this is!" said the porter. "A job!"

"Job be ——" said Mr. Bowes, savagely. "Go and ring thy old bell at station, and leave I to sleep."

"Gentleman wants to go to Meneage, Tom."

"What's he to do to Meneage?" asked Bowes. "'Tain't the colonel or Mr. Arthur. He isn't to home to Meneage."

"Never you mind what I want at Meneage, my man," said Mr. Cameron, stepping forward; "I want you to take me there, and I will pay you well."

"So yer need," said Bowes, sullenly; "a man should be well paid to pull up to Meneage at such a time a night, and in such weather."

"Weather isn't so bad for November," said the porter.

"It'll be bad enough for December and February shuttled up together, before morning, Harry," said Bowes, looking up at the sky. "There will be a fine fight 'twixt wind and rain in an hour's time."

"Then the sooner we're off the better," said Mr. Cameron. "Good-night, my friend," he added, turning to the porter, "and thanks for the trouble you have taken."

The porter knuckled his forehead as he pocketed his gratuity, and took advantage of Bowes's momentary absence to whisper, pointing to the inside of the cottage, "Don't fear 'un, sir."

"Fear!" echoed Mr. Cameron.

"I mean don't mind 'un; he's a little heavy wi' liquor now, and when so, he's apt to be foul-mouthed and blows a little about himself and so on. He's the best boatman in Bridgefoot, and drunk or sober never met with an accident yet."

"Let's trust his usual luck will not forsake him to-night," said Mr. Cameron. "Here he is. Now again, good-night."

And the porter touched his cap and started off, as Bowes reappeared, bearing on his shoulder a pair of sculls and sprit and sail. He had put on the usual fisherman's knitted blue jersey, and carried a yellow oil-skin coat over his arm.

Bowes locked the door behind him, put the key in his pocket, and beckoning Mr. Cameron to follow him, strode down the steps toward the pier. The steamers which take the summer tourists such pleasant excursions had long since been laid up in dock; and in the little creek lying under the lee of the old pier, and sheltered thereby from wind and tide, which in the season is filled with gaily painted craft, were only two boats, each rough, strong, and serviceable. Into one of these boats Bowes threw the gear with which he was laden, and then lowered himself; loosened the rope from the ring which held the boat to the pier side, and, hand over hand, gradually worked her along until she reached the bottom of the small flight of steps.

"Down here," growled Bowes, looking up at his companion; "mind they steps; they be soaked slippery with the slime and

washing of the tide. That's it—go aft now. You're pretty used to this kind of thing I reckon," he added, as Mr. Cameron, passing him lightly, picked up the rudder from the bottom of the boat, and bending with it over the stern, shipped it easily.

"Yes," said Mr. Cameron, with a short laugh, "I have been in a boat before."

"So have I," said Bowes, pulling the boat's head round, and settling down to his work. "I served on board the Vectis at the China war.

"Ah, I remember the Vectis," said Mr. Cameron. "She was commissioned at Avonmouth, and was full of Bridgefoot men."

"I'm no Bridgefoot man."

"Indeed," said Mr. Cameron, who had wrapped himself in his rug, and lit his pipe. "Where do you hail from then?"

"From Tremadoc, the other side of Veryan's Head."

"The deuce you do. I know it well."

"Ah, so does him you're going to visit, Mr. Arthur Stacey, him as lives up in the house there. He's going to be married he is."

"How do you know that?"

"Same way as any other fool; there's no one as hasn't heard that Mr. Arthur's going to be married to Miss Tregenna. It's to be a grand wedding they say; the old squire's mad with joy, and the colonel's coming down from London—keep her starboard, sir. Ha, ha! fancy Mr. Arthur going to be married!"

"It seems to afford you a great deal of amusement," said Mr. Cameron.

"It du, it du, there is nothing I've heard of for many a year I reckon as has made me laugh so much—now, sir, port your helm sharp, and run her on to that spit."

Two minutes after, the boat had run aground, and Bowes had leaped out and was holding her by the painter.

"Safe so far," said Mr. Cameron, as he stood on the strand.

"Ay, so fur," said Bowes, grimly.

"There's your money, my man," said Mr. Cameron. "If you make her fast to that stake she'll be safe enough, and you can walk up with me to the house and have a drink of cider, or what you like."

"Not I," said Bowes, shoving the boat off, and springing into her as she floated; "not a bite nor a sup would I take under Arthur Stacey's roof. I'd deserve to be choked if I did."

"As you please," said Cameron. "You're a queer customer, Mr. Bowes."

"May be," returned Bowes, "may be Arthur Stacey'll find that out before long. Wish him luck from me on his marriage, ha, ha!" And he bent himself to his sculls and went sweeping away with the tide.

Mr. Cameron looked after him for a moment, then shrugged his shoulders, and made the best of his way to the white wicket-gate he saw before him. Passing through it, he found himself on a narrow gravel-path, which led into the broad carriage sweep before the hall-door. Lights were gleaming here and there in the house, and a vigorous application to the bell speedily produced a servant, who told Mr. Cameron the squire had retired, but that Mr. Arthur was still up. The next moment Arthur Stacey appeared in the hall and cordially welcomed the visitor.

"You didn't expect me, Arthur?" said Cameron, when the library door had closed behind them. "I telegraphed this morning that I was coming, but heard at Bridgefoot that the message could not be delivered. I wanted to have a few days' quiet with you before the other wedding guests arrived, and——"

"Thank God you are come, no matter what brought you," said Arthur Stacey. "You are the one man in the world whom I wish to see. I should have telegraphed to you to come to-morrow, if, indeed, I had not run up to London to you."

"What on earth's the matter, man? You seem strangely moved."

"Moved," echoed Stacey, "I have had enough to move me. Stewart," he added, laying his hand on his friend's shoulder, "I have heard fearful news this afternoon."

"News," cried Stewart Cameron. "What news?"

"The most horrible, the most fatal. Ellen Pollard is alive!"

"Good Heavens," cried Cameron. "Your wife?"

"Yes," groaned Stacey, "my miserable wife."

"My poor dear Arthur. Why it seems ages since she—since she left England."

"It is ten years ago since she ran away from me with a man of her own class to America. It is eight years ago since I received what I imagined to be incontrovertible proof of her death."

"In what shape came the news which you heard to-day?"

"In the form of a letter, written in the scrawl I remember so well, and signed 'Ellen Stacey.' The writer said she had heard of my intended marriage, and——"

"And forbade it?"

"No; then I might have doubted its

authenticity. What it did say was so painfully like her real self as to make me tremble. It had suited her purpose, she said, to make me believe that she was dead. She would remain dead, she said, to me and to the world, on the receipt of a thousand pounds; if I failed to send her that sum by the next mail, to a given address in New York, she would return to England and proclaim herself."

"Was there anything else in the letter?"

"Nothing but some horrible ribaldry about Miss Tregenna and her family."

"Miss Tregenna and her family? How could Ellen have learned any particulars of them? Was she acquainted with any one in these parts?"

"Only with one man; a fellow who is now a boatman in Bridgefoot."

"The man who brought me here to-night, Bowes?"

"The same. He came from Tremadoc, the place where I first met her when I went to read with the rector, and he was a sort of lover of hers before she flew at higher game."

Then Stewart Cameron remembered how Bowes had made merry over Arthur Stacey's impending marriage; but remembering it, he held his peace.

"Oh, Stewart," cried Arthur, in an agony of grief, "not even to you until now have I told what I suffered through that fatal folly! It was bad enough to have to conceal the fact of my marriage from the old people at home, to have to pass my time with a woman who was susceptible of no softness, capable of no improvement, careless of the sacrifice which I had made for her, thinking but of her own self, and of how much could be made out of the silly boy who had succumbed to her temptation. But when I came to see her under the influence of drink, smuggled into the house and taken in secret, holding me up to the derision of those chosen friends whom I had foolishly permitted her to retain, scoffing at my parents and at all that was good and true, I felt that my burden was almost insupportable. She relieved me of it at last by her flight. Then came the news of her death, and I thought I might find some solace for my wasted life by a suitable marriage. But years went by and I saw no one I could care for until, within the last few months, I met Maud Tregenna—Maud Tregenna, who is now lost to me for ever!"

"Nonsense," said Cameron, laying his hand on his friend's shoulder, "I never saw the Arthur Stacey of old days throw up the sponge, nor shall he do so now! This matter must he thoroughly sifted!"

"Sifted," echoed Stacey, bitterly. "Where, and by whom?"

"In America, and by me! In my rambling, special-correspondent life, I have seen men and cities, as you know, and there are few places, out of London, with which I am better acquainted than New York. Fifth Avenue drawing-room, lager beer saloons, Bowery boys, barkeepers, I know them all. This is Wednesday, I can get through by way of Bristol, and arrive in Liverpool on Friday, in good time to sail by the Cunard boat on Saturday morning."

"But Maud—Miss Tregenna. What am I to say to her?"

"Leave that to me. I'll have all our plan of action cut and dried and detailed by to-morrow morning; and now, old man, give me some supper, and let me get to bed, for I am hungry and tired, and shall want a long sleep to clear my brain for thinking out what we have to do."

However much Stewart Cameron might have wanted a long sleep, he certainly did not get it; for Arthur Stacey heard him walking up and down his bedroom long after they had retired, and seemed to have scarcely got to sleep before he was aroused by finding Cameron at his bedside.

"Jump up now, Arthur, throw on your dressing-gown, and clear the cobwebs out of your head, for I have only about ten minutes to talk to you——"

"But how will you——"

"Everything is arranged—your man is getting the boat, and I shall catch the morning mail. Now, first about Miss Tregenna; if you have pluck enough, which I much doubt, you shall go and see her, if not, you must write to her. But in any case she must be told at once that most important business calls you to London, and that your marriage *must* be postponed for at least a fortnight. Now, above all things, speak or write brightly and cheerfully, of course expressing the 'desolation' which you feel at your happiness being deferred, but not giving her the smallest idea of any trouble or difficulty in the matter."

"But am I to go to London?"

"Well no, not to London; I think I have a better place than that. It is perfectly obvious that you must get away from this place. You would worry yourself to death in this solitude, or you would be worried to death by some of the Tregenna people, when they found—as with that extraordinary perverseness which always marks

such things, they would certainly find—that you were remaining here."

"You are quite right," said Arthur, quickly. "But where can I go?"

"To see the Slaves of the Lamp, my son."

"The Slaves of the Lamp! Who are they?"

"Mortals, with almost immortal power; men whose lives are passed in blessing and banning; now establishing a kingdom, now announcing a revolution; a movement of their fingers, and Wall-street wails with panic, or the Bank of England is glutted with gold; wealth, poverty, success, failure, courage, despair; nay, almost life or death are daily distributed by them. In a word, the Lamp gives the light, by the reflected movement of which the messages coming through the Atlantic cable are recorded, and the Slaves are the telegraph clerks!"

"But where are these people, and why should I go to them?"

"Answer, number one. At Valentia, on the west coast of Ireland, in a situation of great wild beauty. Answer, number two. Because the scenery will be all novel to you, and the journey will do you good by distracting your thoughts from your own affairs. Because Mr. Gay, the superintendent, is an intimate friend of mine. I went out there as 'special' for the Statesman, to describe the laying of the first cable, and we saw a deal of rough work together in the old Agamemnon. I will give you a letter to him, and guarantee you a welcome from one of the best fellows in the world. And lastly, because you will be there on the spot, in case I want to speak to you across the Atlantic."

"But how am I to——"

"No time for any more. Here is the letter for Gay. Now give me all the letters you have received from Ellen Pollard since her flight. Two, four, six—this one containing the news of her death, signed by—who is this? Oh, Silas Mumford, Presbyterian clergyman; and this one again, signed by herself, asserting her existence, and claiming hush money."

"Of course I would have paid the money willingly enough, but——"

"But you were not going to place Miss Tregenna in a false position, and to make a bigamist of yourself, even for the sake of supplying me with the groundwork of a plot for a new novel. By the way, that reminds me. Here is a memorandum of some letters which I have not time to write, and which you must write for me, in my name, at once. One to Morton, Statesman Office, London, saying that business compels me to absent myself for three weeks, but that I hope to be back in time to write the usual leader about the Yule Log, and the Mistletoe, and all the rest of it, for Christmas Eve. One to Gogerty, publisher, Crane-court, London, telling him I have got together all the stuff for Gogerty's Garland, and it looks pretty good. I'll make it up on the voyage out, and send it him by the return mail. One to Mrs. Clugh, laundress, No. 3, Dossetter's-court, Essex-street; telling her to take advantage of my absence to introduce a little soap and water and a scrubbing-brush into my chambers. Now, old fellow, good-bye. Whatever may happen, good or bad, you shall know almost as soon as I know it myself. Within a very few moments of my hearing any news in New York, one of the Slaves of the Lamp shall read it out to you at Valentia. I have given a general idea of your position to Gay, and I know he will pay you every attention. Now, once more, good-bye; if I want you, you must make the best of your way to Queenstown, and come by the next boat."

Stewart Cameron wrung his friend's hand and was gone.

Stewart Cameron had rightly estimated his friend. Arthur Stacey had not the pluck to see Miss Tregenna, but he wrote her such a letter as Stewart had advised, telling her that the business upon which he was called away was of most vital importance. She could guess what he must feel at having to tear himself away from her at such a time, and he could comprehend what he hoped were her feelings in the matter, but that during their enforced separation, he should never cease to, &c., and he knew that she would never cease to, &c.; in fact, the style of letter which, under such circumstances, has been written from time immemorial, and the popularity of which, from all that can be seen to the contrary, is likely to continue.

Then he further followed Stewart's advice by quitting Meneage at once; but, that step taken, he began to act upon his own ideas. He would go to Valentia, of course, but he did not see any occasion to hurry to his destination. The Cunard steamer, by which, as he saw from the paper, Stewart had sailed, was the Scotia, the fastest of the fleet, but even she must take ten days to arrive at her destination, and then Stewart would have his inquiries to make. So he travelled leisurely to London, and took up his quarters at the Tavistock, in the vain

hope that he might distract his thoughts from the dreary channel in which they never ceased to flow. He had not been a frequent visitor to town since his youthful days, when, like most provincial young men, he knew more of metropolitan amusements and dissipation than most Londoners; but on this occasion he found himself sitting in theatres and supper-rooms, as pre-occupied, and as self-contained, as he had been in his solitude at Meneage, and ever asking himself the constantly recurring question, "What will be the result of Stewart's mission—what future is in store for me?"

He hoped for relief in Dublin, which was a strange city to him, but there the same thoughts and fears eternally haunted him, and would not be laid. Thence, at last, he made his way to Killarney, at that season of the year bleak, blank, and desolate; and thence through the wildest part of Kerry, now winding round the base of mountains, whose tops were enshrouded in purple mist, now crossing narrow stone bridges, under which the storm-swollen rivers ran brown and foaming; now traversing vast tracts of bog-land where the water stood in stagnant pools, and where, here and there, on the bare brown earth from which it had been stripped, the peat lay piled in sods for the winter firing; until he passed through the wretched little town of Cahirciveen, a mile or two beyond which is the ferry connecting the island of Valentia with the mainland.

It was during this portion of his journey that the misery of his position, the horror under which he was suffering on the night of Cameron's arrival, recurred to Arthur Stacey in its fullest force. The savage grandeur of the scenery, the squalor of the mud cabins, the desolate gaunt look of the few human beings he encountered, all had their effect in lowering his spirits and rendering more direful the aspect of the crisis through which he was passing.

He recovered a little when, after a brief interval of rest at the comfortable inn at Valentia, he went over to the handsome block of buildings in which are placed the offices and residences of the Slaves of the Lamp, and was received with great cordiality by their chief. Mr. Gay took Arthur through the building, showing him the handsome hall, where, stowed away for the winter, lay the sails and sculls, the cricket-bats and croquet-mallets, and other implements of summer pastime; the superintendent's own office, filled with scientific works and apparatus; the mess-room, the dormitory, and finally the darkened sanctum of the Lamp and of its reflecting Mirror.

There they were, and there before them was the Slave. There he sat with his eyes intently fixed on a framed white-paper screen in front of him, on which was received the image of the flame reflected from the mirror; while the movements of this spot of light to the right or left of the centre of the paper screen conveyed to the Slave the letters which, formed into words, were read off by him and taken down by a fellow Slave at his side.

"New York, November the 21st, Cunard S. S. Scotia, arrived this morning at ten A.M.," read the Slave, and Stacey knew that by that time Cameron was at work.

That thought rather intensified than relieved his anxiety. He found himself constantly wondering what steps Cameron would take for the elucidation of the mystery. What he might be doing at that particular time, why Ellen Pollard had sent over to England the news of her death, and how she can have been a gainer by the device. Maud Tregenna, too, Arthur could scarcely bear to think of her! He had, while in London, received a letter from her so full of trust and confidence in him, so mindful of his interests, making so much of any question involving his happiness, and so little of her disappointment and distress at his absence and the postponement of the wedding, that he felt half inclined to despise himself for practising even a necessary deception upon her. He had replied to the letter, telling her that his business called him to Ireland, but that his movements would be so uncertain, liable as he was to be summoned from place to place, that he could not give her any fixed address. He would, however, of course write to her. And he had done so. On the second night after his arrival at Valentia, he sat down in the inn guest-room, a chamber which he thought might in the summer look pretty enough, with its view over the ferry, but which was somewhat chill and gaunt in winter, and wrote to Maud Tregenna, such a letter as during his lifetime he had never written. He was not naturally a man of impulse, or easily moved to warmth of expression; but in this letter he poured out all the wealth of love which he had hoarded during the past, all his hopes for their joint future. It seemed, while he was engaged on it, to be an antidote against the surrounding gloom; but by the next morning its effect was gone, and the reaction setting in rendered him worse than ever.

That night Arthur Stacey thought his senses were about to leave him. As he sat over the smouldering fire, and listened to the roaring of the wind without, he thought it would be almost better to return to Cornwall, and tell Maud Tregenna the whole truth, than prolong the mental agony which he had endured that day. In the morning, as on the other days since his arrival, he had visited the temple of the Lamp, the light of which is never extinguished night or day, and had seen the watchful Slaves at their never-ending task. Then he had gone out to the lighthouse, and through the Knight of Kerry's grounds, and from Bray Head had watched the long Atlantic rollers come thundering shoreward, evidences of the storm that had taken place perhaps a thousand leagues away. Such, at least, Arthur Stacey thought them as he gazed on them from the bleak, barren height, and regarded them as ill-omens of the conflict that was raging on his behalf far away in the West.

He ought to have been tired by his wanderings, but the cosiest bed in the world would scarcely have tempted him to sleep, and he was unwilling to tempt the weary unrest and the tossing to and fro, listening to the wailing of the waves, which he knew awaited him up-stairs. He had looked through every sheet of the thumbed and dirty newspapers which lay about the room, and read through all the idiotic scrawl with which the "visitors' book" was bespattered. A torn Black's Guide, and the cover of a work which purported to be "Your Fate Foretold; or, the Norwood Gipsy's Oracle," but the contents of which had apparently cast their skin and vanished, constituted all the literature of the inn.

Arthur thought he would try the traveller's last resource of chatting with the landlord; but the landlord had gone to market at Cahirciveen, and would not be back till late, and he had neither the inclination nor the courage to break in upon the convivial circle, whose boisterous mirth came pealing in from the kitchen. One hope was left him, his servant might have thought to pack some books in the portmanteau. He would go and see.

No, no books, only clothes, and—good Heavens! what is this? The packet of letters concerning Ellen Pollard, which Cameron so particularly desired to take away with him, and without which his inquiries will probably be fruitless? The light in the bedroom was too dim to enable Arthur to convince himself, and he hurried downstairs with the packet in his hand.

No, they were not the letters! Thank Heaven for that! What were they then? A series of manuscripts of different shapes and size, and evidently in various hands, neatly folded, docketed, and tied together in one general wrapping sheet, on which were the following words pencilled in Cameron's well-known hand:

G.'s G. for 187—.
Two horrors — Burke? Hare? (after "Burke" was written "ill—try Grimmer.")
One ghost—explicable.
One ditto—inexplicable.
Comic verse.
Serious ditto.
One London Life—Streeter.
One Sporting ditto—Knox.
One Rambling Experience—Self.
Query—something Irish—Nugent R.?

"G.'s G.?" said Arthur Stacey to himself, "and manuscripts? These must be the intended contents of the Garland, about which I wrote on Stewart's behalf, and which Stewart fondly imagined he had taken with him to arrange on the voyage. He'll be in a tremendous state of mind about it, but I think his wrath would be mitigated if he knew how opportunely they have come in for my relief. Now, let us see what they are about."

He took up the first paper, and listlessly turned over the leaves for a few moments. Presently, finding the manuscript easier to decipher than he had at first expected, he addressed himself to its perusal in earnest.

IN THE CONFESSIONAL.

THE things of which I write befel—let me see, some fifteen or eighteen years ago. I was not young then; I am not old now. Perhaps I was about thirty-two; but I do not know my age very exactly, and I cannot be certain to a year or two one way or the other.

My manner of life at that time was desultory and unsettled. I had a sorrow—no matter of what kind—and I took to rambling about Europe; not certainly in the hope of forgetting it, for I had no wish to forget, but because of the restlessness that made one place after another triste and intolerable to me.

It was change of place, however, and not excitement, that I sought. I kept almost entirely aloof from great cities, spas, and beaten tracks, and preferred, for the most part, to explore districts where travellers and foreigners rarely penetrated.

Such a district at that time was the

Upper Rhine. I was traversing it that particular summer for the first time, and on foot, and I had set myself to trace the course of the river from its source in the great Rhine glacier to its fall at Schaffhausen. Having done this, however, I was unwilling to part company with the noble river, so I decided to follow it yet a few miles further—perhaps as far as Mayence, but at all events as far as Basle.

And now began, if not the finest, certainly not the least charming part of my journey. Here, it is true, were neither Alps nor glaciers, nor ruined castles perched on inaccessible crags, but my way lay through a smiling country studded with picturesque hamlets, and beside a bright river hurrying along over swirling rapids, and under the dark arches of antique covered bridges, and between hillsides garlanded with vines.

It was towards the middle of a long day's walk among such scenes as these, that I came to Rheinfelden, a small place on the left bank of the river, about fourteen miles above Basle.

As I came down the white road in the blinding sunshine, with the vines on either hand, I saw the town lying low on the opposite bank of the Rhine. It was an old walled town, enclosed on the land side, and open to the river, the houses going sheer down to the water's edge, with flights of slimy steps worn smooth by the wash of the current, and overhanging eaves, and little built-out rooms with penthouse roofs, supported from below by jutting piles black with age, and tapestried with water-weeds. The stunted towers of a couple of churches stood up from amid the brown and tawny roofs within the walls. Beyond the town, height above height, stretched a distance of wooded hills. The old covered bridge, divided by a bit of rocky island in the middle of the stream, led from bank to bank—from Germany to Switzerland. The town was in Switzerland; I, looking towards it from the road, stood on Baden territory; the river ran sparkling and foaming between.

I crossed, and found the place all alive in anticipation of a Kermess, or fair, that was to be held there the next day but one. The townsfolk were all out in the streets, or standing about their doors; and there were carpenters hard at work knocking up rows of wooden stands and stalls, the whole length of the principal thoroughfare. Shop-signs in open work of wrought iron hung over the doors. A runlet of sparkling water babbled down a stone channel in the middle of the street. At almost every other house (to judge by the rows of tarnished watches hanging in the dingy parlour windows), there lived a watchmaker; and presently I came to a fountain, a regular Swiss fountain, spouting water from four ornamental pipes, and surmounted by the usual armed knight in old grey stone.

As I rambled on thus (looking for an inn, but seeing none), I suddenly found that I had reached the end of the street, and, with it, the limit of the town on this side. Before me rose a lofty, picturesque old gate-tower, with a tiled roof, and a little window over the archway, and there was a peep of green grass and golden sunshine beyond. The town walls (sixty or seventy feet in height, and curiously roofed, with a sort of projecting shed on the inner side) curved away to right and left, unchanged since the Middle Ages. A rude wain, laden with clover, and drawn by mild-eyed, cream-coloured oxen, stood close by in the shade.

I passed out through the gloom of the archway into the sunny space beyond. The moat outside the walls was bridged over and filled in — a green ravine of grasses and wild-flowers. A stork had built its nest on the roof of the gate-tower. The cicalas shrilled in the grass. The shadows lay sleeping under the trees, and a family of cocks and hens went plodding inquisitively to and fro among the cabbages in the adjacent field. Just beyond the moat, with only this field between, stood a little solitary church—a church with a wooden porch, and a quaint, bright-red steeple, and a churchyard like a rose-garden, full of colour and perfume, and scattered over with iron crosses wreathed with immortelles.

The churchyard gate and the church door stood open. I went in. All was clean, and simple, and very poor. The walls were whitewashed; the floor was laid with red bricks; the roof raftered. A tiny confessional like a sentry-box stood in one corner; the font was covered with a lid like a wooden steeple; and over the altar, upon which stood a pair of battered brass candlesticks and two vases of artificial flowers, hung a caricature of the Holy Family, in oils.

All here was so cool, so quiet, that I sat down for a few moments and rested. Presently an old peasant woman trudged up the church path with a basket of vegetables on her head. Having set this down in the porch, she came in, knelt before the altar, said her simple prayers, and went her way.

Was it not time for me also to go my way? I looked at my watch. It was past four o'clock, and I had not yet found a lodging for the night.

I got up, somewhat unwillingly; but, attracted by a tablet near the altar, crossed over to look at it before leaving the church. It was a very small slab, and bore a very brief German inscription to this effect:

TO THE SACRED MEMORY
OF
THE REVEREND PÈRE CHESSEZ,
For twenty years the beloved Pastor of this Parish.
Died April 16th, 1825. Aged 44.
HE LIVED A SAINT; HE DIED A MARTYR.

I read it over twice, wondering idly what story was wrapped up in the concluding line. Then, prompted by a childish curiosity, I went up to examine the confessional.

It was, as I have said, about the size of a sentry-box, and was painted to imitate old dark oak. On the one side was a narrow door with a black handle, on the other a little opening like a ticket-taker's window, closed on the inside by a faded green curtain.

I know not what foolish fancy possessed me, but, almost without considering what I was doing, I turned the handle and opened the door. Opened it, peeped in, found the priest sitting in his place, started back as if I had been shot, and stammered an unintelligible apology.

"I—I beg a thousand pardons," I exclaimed. "I had no idea—seeing the church empty——"

He was sitting with averted face, and clasped hands lying idly in his lap—a tall, gaunt man, dressed in a black soutane. When I paused, and not till then, he slowly, very slowly, turned his head, and looked me in the face.

The light inside the confessional was so dim that I could not see his features very plainly. I only observed that his eyes were large, and bright, and wild-looking, like the eyes of some fierce animal, and that his face, with the reflection of the green curtain upon it, looked lividly pale.

For a moment we remained thus, gazing at each other, as if fascinated. Then, finding that he made no reply, but only stared at me with those strange eyes, I stepped hastily back, shut the door without another word, and hurried out of the church.

I was very much disturbed by this little incident, more disturbed, in truth, than seemed reasonable, for my nerves for the moment were quite shaken. Never, I told myself, never while I lived could I forget that fixed attitude and stony face, or the glare of those terrible eyes. What was the man's history? Of what secret despair, of what life-long remorse, of what wild unsatisfied longings was he the victim? I felt I could not rest till I had learned something of his past life.

Full of these thoughts, I went on quickly into the town, half running across the field, and never looking back. Once past the gateway, and inside the walls, I breathed more freely. The wain was still standing in the shade, but the oxen were gone now, and two men were busy forking out the clover into a little yard close by. Having inquired of one of these regarding an inn, and being directed to the Krone, "over against the Frauenkirche," I made my way to the upper part of the town, and there, at one corner of a forlorn, weed-grown market-place, I found my hostelry.

The landlord, a sedate, bald man, in spectacles, who, as I presently discovered, was not only an inn-keeper, but a clock-maker, came out from an inner room to receive me. His wife, a plump, pleasant body, took my orders for dinner. His pretty daughter showed me to my room. It was a large, low, whitewashed room, with two lattice windows, overlooking the market-place, two little beds, covered with puffy red eiderdowns at the farther end, and an army of clocks and ornamental timepieces arranged along every shelf, table, and chest of drawers in the room. Being left here to my meditations, I sat down and counted these companions of my solitude.

Taking little and big together, Dutch clocks, cuckoo clocks, châlet clocks, skeleton clocks, and pendules in ormulu, bronze, marble, ebony, and alabaster cases, there were exactly thirty-two. Twenty-eight were going merrily. As no two among them were of the same opinion as regarded the time, and as several struck the quarters as well as the hours, the consequence was that one or other gave tongue about every five minutes. Now, for a light and nervous sleeper such as I was at that time, here was a lively prospect for the night!

Going down-stairs presently with the hope of getting my landlady to assign me a quieter room, I passed two eight-day clocks on the landing, and a third at the foot of the stairs. The public room was equally well stocked. It literally bristled with clocks, one of which played a spasmodic version of Gentle Zitella, with variations, every quarter of an hour. Here I found a little table prepared by the open window, and a dish of trout and a flask of country wine awaiting me. The pretty

daughter waited upon me. Her mother bustled to and fro with the dishes; and the landlord stood by, and beamed upon me through his spectacles.

"The trout were caught this morning, about two miles from here," he said, complacently.

"They are excellent," I replied, filling him out a glass of wine, and helping myself to another. "Your health, Herr Wirth."

"Thanks, mein Herr—yours."

Just at this moment two clocks struck at opposite ends of the room—one twelve and the other seven. I ventured to suggest that mine host was tolerably well reminded of the flight of time; whereupon he explained that his work lay chiefly in the repairing and regulating line, and that at that present moment he had no less than one hundred and eighteen clocks of various sorts and sizes on the premises.

"Perhaps the Herr Engländer is a light sleeper," said his quick-witted wife, detecting my dismay. "If so, we can get him a bedroom elsewhere. Not perhaps in the town, for I know no place where he would be as comfortable as with ourselves, but just outside the Friedrich's Thor, not five minutes' walk from our door."

I accepted the offer gratefully.

"So long," I said, "as I insure cleanliness and quiet, I do not care how homely my lodgings may be."

"Ah, you'll have both, mein Herr, if you go where my wife is thinking of," said the landlord. "It is at the house of our pastor—the Père Chessez."

"The Père Chessez!" I exclaimed. "What, the pastor of the little church out yonder?"

"The same, mein Herr."

"But—but surely the Père Chessez is dead! I saw a tablet to his memory in the chancel."

"Nay, that was our pastor's elder brother," replied the landlord, looking grave. "He has been gone these thirty years and more. His was a tragical ending."

But I was thinking too much of the younger brother just then to feel any curiosity about the elder; and I told myself that I would put up with the companionship of any number of clocks, rather than sleep under the same roof with that terrible face and those unearthly eyes.

"I saw your pastor just now in the church," I said, with apparent indifference. "He is a singular-looking man."

"He is too good for this world," said the landlady.

"He is a saint upon earth!" added the pretty Fraülein.

"He is one of the best of men," said, more soberly, the husband and father. "I only wish he was less of a saint. He fasts, and prays, and works beyond his strength. A little more beef and a little less devotion would be all the better for him."

"I should like to hear something more about the life of so good a man," said I, having by this time come to the end of my simple dinner. "Come, Herr Wirth, let us have a bottle of your best, and then sit down and tell me your pastor's history!"

The landlord sent his daughter for a bottle of the "green seal," and, taking a chair, said:

"Ach Himmel! mein Herr, there is no history to tell. The good father has lived here all his life. He is one of us. His father, Johann Chessez, was a native of Rheinfelden, and kept this very inn. He was a wealthy farmer, and vine-grower as well. He had only those two sons—Nicholas, who took to the church, and became pastor of Feldkirche; and this one, Matthias, who was intended to inherit the business; but who also entered religion after the death of his elder brother, and is now pastor of the same parish."

"But why did he 'enter religion'?" I asked. "Was he in any way to blame for the accident (if it was an accident) that caused the death of his elder brother?"

"Ah, Heavens! no!" exclaimed the landlady, leaning on the back of her husband's chair. "It was the shock—the shock that told so terribly upon his poor nerves! He was but a lad at that time, and as sensitive as a girl—but the Herr Engländer does not know the story. Go on, my husband."

So the landlord, after a sip of the "green seal," continued:

"At the time my wife alludes to, mein Herr, Johann Chessez was still living. Nicholas, the elder son, was in holy orders and established in the parish of Feldkirche, outside the walls; and Matthias, the younger, was a lad of about fourteen years old, and lived with his father. He was an amiable, good boy—pious and thoughtful—fonder of his books than of the business. The neighbour-folk used to say even then that Matthias was cut out for a priest, like his elder brother. As for Nicholas, he was neither more nor less than a saint. Well, mein Herr, at this time there lived on the other side of Rheinfelden, about a mile beyond the Basel Thor, a farmer named Caspar Rufenacht and his

wife Margaret. Now Caspar Rufenacht was a jealous, quarrelsome fellow; and the Frau Margaret was pretty; and he led her a devil of a life. It was said that he used to beat her when he had been drinking, and that sometimes, when he went to fair or market, he would lock her up for the whole day in a room at the top of the house. Well, this poor, ill-used Frau Margaret——"

"Tut, tut, my man," interrupted the landlady. "The Frau Margaret was a light one!"

"Peace, wife! Shall we speak hard words of the dead? The Frau Margaret was young, and pretty, and a flirt; and she had a bad husband who left her too much alone."

The landlady pursed up her lips, and shook her head, as the best of women will do when the character of another woman is under discussion. The innkeeper went on.

"Well, mein Herr, to cut a long story short, after having been jealous first of one and then of another, Caspar Rufenacht became furious about a certain German, a Badener, named Schmidt, living on the opposite bank of the Rhine. I remember the man quite well, a handsome, merry fellow, and no saint; just the sort to make mischief between man and wife. Well, Caspar Rufenacht swore a great oath that, cost what it might, he would come at the truth about his wife and Schmidt; so he laid all manner of plots to surprise them—waylaid the Frau Margaret in her walks, followed her at a distance when she went to church, came home at unexpected hours, and played the spy as if he had been brought up to the trade. But his spying was all in vain. Either the Frau Margaret was too clever for him, or there was really nothing to discover, but still he was not satisfied. So he cast about for some way to attain his end, and, by the help of the Evil One, he found it."

Here the innkeeper's wife and daughter, who had doubtless heard the story a hundred times over, drew near and listened breathlessly.

"What, think you," continued the landlord, "does this black-souled Caspar do? Does he punish the poor woman within an inch of her life, till she confesses? No. Does he charge Schmidt with having tempted her from her duty, and fight it out with him like a man? No. What else then? I will tell you. He waits till the vigil of St. Margaret—her saint's day—when he knows the poor sinful soul is going to confession; and he marches straight to the house of the Père Chessez—the very house where our own Père Chessez is now living—and he finds the good priest at his devotions in his little study, and he says to him: 'Father Chessez, my wife is coming to the church this afternoon to make her confession to you.' 'She is,' replies the priest. 'I want you to tell me all she tells you,' says Caspar; 'and I will wait here till you come back from the church, that I may hear it. Will you do so?' 'Certainly not,' replies the Père Chessez; 'you must surely know, Caspar, that we priests are forbidden to reveal the secrets of the confessional.' 'That is nothing to me,' says Caspar, with an oath. 'I am resolved to know whether my wife is guilty or innocent; and know it I will, by fair means or foul.' 'You shall never know it from me, Caspar,' says the Père Chessez, very quietly. 'Then, by Heavens!' says Caspar, 'I'll learn it for myself.' And with that he pulls out a heavy horse-pistol from his pocket, and with the butt-end of it deals the Père Chessez a tremendous blow upon the head, and then another, and another, till the poor young man lay senseless at his feet. Then Caspar, thinking he had quite killed him, dressed himself in the priest's own soutane and hat, locked the door, put the key in his pocket, and stealing round the back way into the church, shut himself up in the confessional."

"Then the priest died!" I exclaimed, remembering the epitaph upon the tablet.

"Ay, mein Herr—the Père Chessez died; but not before he had told the story of his assassination, and identified his murderer."

"And Caspar Rufenacht, I hope, was hanged?"

"Wait a bit, mein Herr, we have not come to that yet. We left Caspar in the confessional, waiting for his wife."

"And she came?"

"Yes, poor soul! she came."

"And made her confession?"

"And made her confession, mein Herr."

"What did she confess?"

The innkeeper shook his head.

"That no one ever knew, save the good God and her murderer."

"Her murderer!" I exclaimed.

"Ay, just that. Whatever it was that she confessed, she paid for it with her life. He heard her out, at all events, without discovering himself, and let her go home believing that she had received absolution for her sins. Those who met her that afternoon said she seemed unusually bright and happy. As she passed through the

town, she went into a shop in the Mongarten Strasse and bought some ribbons. About half an hour later, my own father met her outside the Basel Thor, walking briskly homewards. He was the last who saw her alive. That evening (it was in October, and the days were short), some travellers coming that way into the town heard shrill cries, as of a woman screaming, in the direction of Caspar's farm. But the night was very dark, and the house lay back a little way from the road; so they told themselves it was only some drunken peasant quarrelling with his wife, and passed on. Next morning Caspar Rufenacht came to Rheinfelden, walked very quietly into the Polizei, and gave himself up to justice. 'I have killed my wife,' said he. 'I have killed tho Père Chessez. And I have committed sacrilege.' And so, indeed, it was. As for the Frau Margaret, they found her body in an upper chamber, well-nigh hacked to pieces, and the hatchet with which the murder was committed lying beside her on the floor. He had pursued her, apparently, from room to room; for there were pools of blood and handfuls of long light hair, and marks of bloody hands along the walls, all the way from the kitchen to the spot where she lay dead."

"And so he was hanged?" said I, coming back to my original question.

"Yes, yes," replied the innkeeper and his womankind in chorus. "He was hanged, of course he was hanged."

"And it was the shock of this double tragedy that drove the younger Chessez into the church?"

"Just so, mein Herr."

"Well, he carries it in his face. He looks like a most unhappy man."

"Nay, he is not that, mein Herr!" exclaimed the landlady. "He is melancholy, but not unhappy."

"Well, then, austere."

"Nor is he austere, except towards himself."

"True, wife," said the innkeeper; "but, as I said, he carries that sort of thing too far. You understand, mein Herr," he added, touching his forehead with his forefinger, "the good pastor has let his mind dwell too much upon the past. He is nervous, too nervous, and too low."

I saw it all now. That terrible light in his eyes was the light of insanity. That stony look in his face was the fixed, hopeless melancholy of a mind diseased.

"Does he know that he is mad?" I asked, as the landlord rose to go. He shrugged his shoulders and looked doubtful.

"I have not said that the Père Chessez is *mad*, mein Herr," he replied. "He has strange fancies sometimes, and takes his fancies for facts, that is all. But I am quite sure that he does not believe himself to be less sane than his neighbours."

So the innkeeper left me, and I (my head full of the story I had just heard) put on my hat, went out into the market-place, asked my way to the Basel Thor, and set off to explore the scene of the Frau Margaret's murder.

I found it without difficulty — a long, low-fronted, beetle-browed farm-house, lying back a meadow's length from the road. There were children playing upon the threshold, a flock of turkeys gobbling about the barn-door, and a big dog sleeping outside his kennel close by. The chimneys, too, were smoking merrily. Seeing these signs of life and cheerfulness, I abandoned all idea of asking to go over the house. I felt that I had no right to carry my morbid curiosity into this peaceful home; so I turned away, and retraced my steps towards Rheinfelden.

It was not yet seven, and the sun had still an hour's course to run. I re-entered the town, strolled back through the street, and presently came again to the Friedrich's Thor and the path leading to the church. An irresistible impulse seemed to drag me back to the place. Shudderingly, and with a sort of dread that was half longing, I pushed open the churchyard gate and went in. The doors were closed; a goat was browsing among the graves; and the rushing of the Rhine, some three hundred yards away, was distinctly audible in the silence. I looked round for the priest's house—the scene of the first murder; but from this side, at all events, no house was visible. Going round, however, to the back of the church, I saw a gate, a box-bordered path, and, peeping through some trees, a chimney and the roof of a little brown-tiled house.

This, then, was the path along which Caspar Rufenacht, with the priest's blood upon his hands, and the priest's gown upon his shoulders, had taken his guilty way to the confessional! How quiet it all looked in the golden evening light! How like the church path of an English parsonage!

I wished I could have seen something more of the house than that bit of roof and that one chimney. There must, I told myself, be some other entrance—some way round by the road! Musing and lingering thus, I was startled by a quiet voice close against my shoulder, saying:

"A pleasant evening, mein Herr!"

I turned, and found the priest at my elbow. He had come noiselessly across the grass, and was standing between me and the sunset, like a shadow.

"I—I beg your pardon," I stammered, moving away from the gate. "I was looking——"

I stopped in some surprise, and indeed with some sense of relief; for it was not the same priest that I had seen in the morning. No two, indeed, could well be more unlike; for this man was small, white-haired, gentle-looking, with a soft, sad smile inexpressibly sweet and winning.

"You were looking at my arbutus?" he said.

I had scarcely observed the arbutus till now, but I bowed and said something to the effect that it was an unusually fine tree.

"Yes," he replied; "but I have a rhododendron round at the front that is still finer. Will you come in and see it?"

I said I should be pleased to do so; he led the way, and I followed.

"I hope you like this part of our Rhine-country?" he said, as we took the path through the shrubbery.

"I like it so well," I replied, "that if I were to live anywhere on the banks of the Rhine, I should certainly choose some spot on the Upper Rhine between Schaffhausen and Basle."

"And you would be right," he said. "Nowhere is the river so beautiful. Nearer the glaciers it is milky and turbid—beyond Basle it soon becomes muddy. Here we have it blue as the sky — sparkling as champagne. Here is my rhododendron. It stands twelve feet high, and measures as many in diameter. I had more than two hundred blooms upon it last spring."

When I had duly admired this giant shrub, he took me to a little arbour on a bit of steep green bank overlooking the river, where he invited me to sit down and rest. From hence I could see the porch and part of the front of his little house; but it was all so closely planted round with trees and shrubs, that no clear view of it seemed obtainable in any direction. Here we sat for some time chatting about the weather, the approaching vintage, and so forth, and watching the sunset. Then I rose to take my leave.

"I heard of you this evening at the Krone, mein Herr," he said. "You were out, or I should have called upon you. I am glad that chance has made us acquainted. Do you remain over to-morrow?"

"No; I must go on to-morrow to Basle," I answered. And then, hesitating a little, I added: "You heard of me, also, I fear, in the church."

"In the church?" he repeated.

"Seeing the door open, I went in—from curiosity—as a traveller; just to look round for a moment, and rest."

"Naturally."

"I—I had no idea, however, that I was not alone there. I would not for the world have intruded——"

"I do not understand," he said, seeing me hesitate. "The church stands open all day long. It is free to every one."

"Ah! I see he has not told you!"

The priest smiled, but looked puzzled.

"He? Whom do you mean?"

"The other priest, mon père—your colleague. I regret to have broken in upon his meditations; but I had been so long in the church, and it was all so still and quiet, that it never occurred to me that there might be some one in the confessional."

The priest looked at me in a strange, startled way.

"In the confessional!" he repeated, with a catching of his breath. "You saw some one—in the confessional?"

"I am ashamed to say that, having thoughtlessly opened the door——"

"You saw—what did you see?"

"A priest, mon père."

"A priest! Can you describe him? Should you know him again? Was he pale, and tall, and gaunt, with long black hair?"

"The same, undoubtedly."

"And his eyes—did you observe anything particular about his eyes?"

"Yes, they were large, wild-looking, dark eyes, with a look in them—a look I cannot describe."

"A look of terror!" cried the pastor, now greatly agitated. "A look of terror—of remorse—of despair!"

"Yes, it was a look that might mean all that," I replied, my astonishment increasing at every word. "You seem troubled. Who is he?"

But instead of answering my question, the pastor took off his hat, looked up with a radiant, awe-struck face, and said:

"All-merciful God, I thank Thee! I thank Thee that I am not mad, and that Thou hast sent this stranger to be my assurance and my comfort!"

Having said these words, he bowed his head, and his lips moved in silent prayer. When he looked up again, his eyes were full of tears.

"My son," he said, laying his trembling hand upon my arm, "I owe you an expla-

nation; but I cannot give it to you now. It must wait till I can speak more calmly—till to-morrow, when I must see you again. It involves a terrible story—a story peculiarly painful to myself—enough now if I tell you that I have seen the Thing you describe—seen it many times; and yet, because it has been visible to my eyes alone, I have doubted the evidence of my senses. The good people here believe that much sorrow and meditation have touched my brain. I have half believed it myself till now. But you—you have proved to me that I am the victim of no illusion."

"But, in Heaven's name," I exclaimed, "what do you suppose I saw in the confessional?"

"You saw the likeness of one who, guilty also of a double murder, committed the deadly sin of sacrilege in that very spot, more than thirty years ago," replied the Père Chessez, solemnly.

"Caspar Rufenacht!"

"Ah! you have heard the story? Then I am spared the pain of telling it to you. That is well."

I bent my head in silence, and we walked together without another word to the wicket, and thence round to the churchyard gate. It was now twilight, and the first stars were out.

"Good-night, my son," said the pastor, giving me his hand. "Peace be with you."

As he spoke the words, his grasp tightened—his eyes dilated—his whole countenance became rigid.

"Look!" he whispered. "Look where it goes!"

I followed the direction of his eyes, and there, with a freezing horror which I have no words to describe, I saw—distinctly saw through the deepening gloom—a tall, dark figure in a priest's soutane and broad-brimmed hat, moving slowly across the path leading from the parsonage to the church. For a moment it seemed to pause—then passed on to the deeper shade, and disappeared.

"You saw it?" said the pastor.

"Yes—plainly."

He drew a deep breath; crossed himself devoutly; and leaned upon the gate, as if exhausted.

"This is the third time I have seen it this year," he said. "Again I thank God for the certainty that I see a visible thing, and that His great gift of reason is mine unimpaired. But I would that He were graciously pleased to release me from the sight—the horror of it is sometimes more than I know how to bear. Good-night."

With this, he again touched my hand; so, seeing that he wished to be alone, I silently left him. At the Friedrich's Thor I turned and looked back. He was still standing by the churchyard gate, just visible through the gloom of the fast deepening twilight.

. . . . . .

I never saw the Père Chessez again. Save his own old servant, I was the last who spoke with him in this world. He died that night—died in his bed, where he was found next morning with his hands crossed upon his breast, and with a placid smile upon his lips, as if he had fallen asleep in the act of prayer.

As the news spread from house to house, the whole town rang with lamentations. The church-bells tolled; the carpenters left their work in the streets; the children, dismissed from school, went home weeping.

"'Twill be the saddest Kermess in Rheinfelden to-morrow, mien Herr!" said my good host of the Krone, as I shook hands with him at parting. "We have lost the best of pastors and of friends. He was a saint. If you had come but one day later, you would not have seen him!"

And with this he brushed his sleeve across his eyes, and turned away.

Every shutter was up, every blind down, every door closed, as I passed along the Friedrich's Strasse about mid-day, on my way to Basle; and the few townsfolk I met looked grave and downcast. Then I crossed the bridge, and, having shown my passport to the German sentry on the Baden side, I took one long, last farewell look at the little walled town as it lay sleeping in the sunshine by the river—knowing that I should see it no more.

"That's 'one ghost,' evidently," said Arthur Stacey, referring to Cameron's pencilled memorandum, "and I should say decidedly 'inexplicable.' Now for the next," and he took up the underlying paper, which was labelled—

THE SIGNOR JOHN.

I.

It seems but this morning that I got up before the sun, in our little wooden house, to cook, bake, wash in the river, help to mow the grass, coax my father, serve my brother Niccolo, and be as happy as the grasshoppers that sing both night and day. We lived upon a very high Alp, and we were poor, though we did not suffer hard-

ship. In winter we had plenty of pine-logs to keep the fire alive, and at night we were very gay, singing songs, and playing the zither. In summer we breakfasted on the grass in the faint dawn, dined under the long roof at the sheltered side of the house, and supped by the starlight; after which I danced for my father, while Niccolo played the pipes. The chance passing of travellers was an excitement to us. A wood-carver from the Tyrol sprained his foot near our place, and taught Niccolo to carve whilst we nursed him. This was something to be grateful for, as travellers would buy the work, and besides, it gave our boy something to do. He was a cripple from his birth; one foot did not come to the ground somehow, and his back was a good deal bent. He had a little square face, with bright eyes, and brown hair, and was said to be quite a Swiss, as our mother had been. The first figure he carved was my patron saint, Christopher, wading through the torrent with the Child-God on his shoulders, and it was given me after he had bitten one of my fingers because I had stayed out alone in the moonlight, forgetting to fetch him. He never was so vexed, however, that I could not offer him comfort, asking him to plait my long hair, which came to my ankles. I would sit down on the ground with my back against his knees, when he would dress the hair beautifully. If I were restless he would hurt me, if I were patient he would kiss me; and if his work pleased him fully, he was blithe the rest of the day.

Once I went with my father to a feast at a lower village, the festa of St. Florian. This was the first occasion on which I wore my mother's costume. On the night before the feast I was holding out my foot to note how my shabby skirt had crept up my leg. My father came and measured me with his alpenstock. "You are now as tall as your mother," he said; "you may henceforth wear her clothes." He shed tears in the morning when he saw me in her dress, but was so well pleased afterwards, that I ran to the nearest tarn to see what I could be like. The tarn was nearly filled with rosy clouds, besides a gigantic pine-tree, which tapered up and broke them. I seized the sombre draperies of the pine-tree, and, gazing into the water, saw a maiden like the women whose fathers are wealthy vine-dressers. Her petticoat was of orange cloth, her long, narrow apron of a rich shade of blue, her black velvet bodice was laced with gold over white, and a deep red sash was folded well about her waist. The only part of the picture that I knew was a pale dark countenance, with bright red lips, and the wide black eyes that seemed to take up half the face. I marked Niccolo's plaits and the silver arrows he had fastened in them, and the bunch of scarlet ash-berries which he had fixed behind my ear. I saw that this was myself, and ran merrily back to the châlet to hug my little Niccolo, and tell him not to pinch our neighbour Teresa, who was kindly coming to keep house for him whilst my father and I were away.

Placido with his mule came to meet us: a young man of the village who had sometimes business on our Alp. He brought us to see his house, in which he had just put pretty furniture, and asked us to praise the fresco of St. Florian upon the gable, which he had lately got retouched for the festa. He had also made a new staircase up to his balcony; and the people joked Placido, saying he meant to take a wife.

It was a very pleasant festa. People treated me as a woman, now that I was grown enough to wear my mother's clothes. I was often asked to dance, and listened to with attention when I sang and played the zither. The next day Placido brought us a long way upon our road towards home; we could not get him to leave us till the worst of the journey was past. Thanks to his stout mule, we got over all our difficulties, and were going along merrily, when we heard a voice above us shouting through the pines.

Right above our heads there was a desert of lonely crags, a wild and dreaded place, where death lies in wait for men. My father left me sitting upon a pine-stump, and went shouting up the crags, seeking the stranger who had called. He returned with him by-and-bye, and we hurried along on our journey, for though the air was flushed with colour, yet the darkness was close at hand. We hastened along in silence, dragging each other up steeps, and going hand in hand, step by step, slowly across narrow shifty places. The traveller had a fair foreign look, which is to us most perfect beauty. His locks shone in the twilight, after my father's dusky head had got lost in the gloom of the pines.

Arrived at our Alp at last, we found Teresa preparing supper, and Niccolo sitting in the doorway, piping shrilly up to the moon. The stranger gave me his hand up the last ascent, then raised it to his lips.

"My pretty little girl," he said, "you have certainly saved my life."

When Niccolo saw us coming he limped to meet us.

"Who is this that has come with you, Netta, who smiles and kisses your hand?"

"Hush! Niccolo; he is English, but he understands our talk."

The stranger threw down his hat and knapsack before our door. The firelight shone over the threshold, and our neighbour Teresa appeared carrying out the supper-table, which she placed upon the grass.

The next morning, when I wakened, I peeped down between the rafters of my bedroom in the loft, and saw the stranger talking to my father in the doorway.

I crept down the ladder, and found nobody in the place. Niccolo had lit the fire for me, and gone away to his work, and I heard my father's voice shouting in the distance. The signor was then gone. I heaved a sigh between regret and relief, and seized hold of a pitcher, and prepared to go to the tarn. I made a step across the threshold and started back; the signor was leaning smoking against our châlet.

I sprang back so quickly that I broke the pitcher, and had to press my hand on my eyes to keep the tears from falling.

"Child!" said the signor, smiling in at me, "why do you take such pains to hide your face? One does not see so pretty a thing every day."

"I am not pretty this morning," I said. "It was only my mother's clothes. And I was hiding my face in trouble because I have broken my jug."

"And you were going to fetch water?" he said, "and yonder pail is too heavy for you? And it was all owing to me that you broke the pitcher?"

He lifted the pail on his shoulders. "Come, let us fetch the water," he said; "I shall want you to show the way."

We fetched the water together, and the stranger taught me to call him the Signor John. He had an air grand and gentle, and a pleasant light in his eyes. He laughed gaily when amused, and that encouraged me. At breakfast we saw no Niccolo, and I invited the Signor John to look at his carvings: at St. Barbara with her tower, St. Dorothy and her roses, St. Vincent among his orphans, St. Elizabeth, whose royal mantle was filled with bread. Niccolo had carved them all, and they stood in a row in his workshop. They were far the finest things we had got in our châlet; yet when I brought the signor to look at them Niccolo shut the door in his face.

"Never mind!" said the Signor John, "we can amuse ourselves; I wish to make a sketch of you if you don't object to sit."

"I ought to be at my work," I said; but ran to tell my father, who was chopping wood in the pine-brake.

"It is an honour not to be refused," he said. "You must ask the good Teresa to stay and prepare our dinner."

The signor spread out his pictures for me to see; saying he was an artist only by love, and not by profession. I thought that love must have the best of it, so beautiful was his work; much finer than Placido's fresco, which was considered something grand. There were pictures of lovely ladies who were of his own country; and their beauty seemed to laugh at me, and my heart began to sink.

"Signor," I said, almost tearfully, "shall I not return to the châlet, and put on my mother's clothes?"

"Your mother's clothes!" he cried, amazed.

"Those I had on yesterday. The colours are gay and bright. Else I shall make such an ugly picture—you will throw it away."

"You make far the prettiest picture I have ever seen," he said, "and I shall hang it up where I can look at it every day."

I blushed with surprised delight. "Thank you, Signor John," I muttered, and crossed my hands as he had arranged them, and gazed over into the pine-forest in a way which he had already approved.

The signor remained at our châlet for a whole week. Every morning we started on some new excursion; he and I together, for my father had not time to attend to him, and Niccolo could not walk.

One evening we were all at supper when Placido appeared with his mule coming up our Alp. My father welcomed him kindly, and bade him sit down and eat. He looked strangely at the Signor John, and then at me, but our new friend spoke to him pleasantly, and they were soon conversing together. Placido was a large man, with a calm face. He had dark thoughtful eyes, and brows well bent above them, and a heap of coal-black locks that left his temples broad and bare. He had a slow gentle smile, but was quick and firm in speech. "As steady as Placido Lorez," was a by-word down in his village.

After supper was over Placido seized on the supper-table and carried it back to the châlet; I following on his steps with a dish and ewer. As I washed the platters and restored them to their shelves Placido put logs on the fire, and blew them into flames.

I finished my task and put off my apron, chattering gaily to him all the time. I could see his figure looming out against the firelight, and at the same time my father and the Signor John standing talking out in the moonlight.

Placido had given me very absent answers; but at last made a sudden move, and with two long strides stood right before me.

"Netta," he said, "I came to ask if you would marry me."

I was utterly amazed and a good deal frightened; he looked so very determined, as if I must come off that moment, whether I would or not. My knees knocked together, and I clung to the table.

"You don't really mean it, Placido; you cannot want a wife!"

"Not *any* wife," he said; "I only ask for you."

"Oh, Placido, don't!" I said.

"Look you, my little dearest one!" he urged, "you may think me a rough lover. But never was a wife more loved and prized than you will be, if you come to me!"

"Thank you, Placido," I said, "you mean to be very kind to me; but I do not think about marrying; and please be so very good as not to ask me again."

My father and the Signor John here put in their heads at the door.

"What is this that is going on?" said my father. "Netta! are you scolding our neighbour?"

"Oh, no, no!" cried Placido, "it is only that my suit displeases her. I asked her just now to marry me; and she does not wish to consent."

"What?" cried my father, turning to me. "You don't mean to say that you would refuse so kind an offer? Do not think about me, my daughter. I would rather see you provided for than keep you for my comfort."

"I do not like to marry," I said, weeping. "I do not love Placido, and it would be dreadful to have to marry him."

Placido's face flushed and then turned pale again. "I did not come here to make you weep," he said, sadly. "The pain of my disappointment is not worth one of your tears."

He turned to go away, but my father seized him by the arm. "Wait, my dear friend!" he said, "and do not be offended at a girl who is still a child."

Then turning to the signor, who had looked on gravely at this scene:

"Signor! come to my assistance," he cried. "Netta will heed your counsel."

The signor looked at me tenderly, with an uneasy look in his face.

"As you say, she is only a child," he said. "I beg you will give her a little longer time to play."

"So be it then," said my father.

I drew a long breath of relief, and looked gratefully at the friend who had saved me. Placido gazed from me to the signor, and from the signor back to me; then suddenly laid hold of his alpenstock and bade us a quick good-night.

After this we had some more pleasant days, till at last there arrived a sad one when the signor prepared to leave us. I felt an odd pain in my heart which I could not drive away. The night before his departure I was standing at the fire alone; the logs were almost burnt, and lay in a red heap on the hearth. The signor came and stood by me.

"Netta, when I am gone you must often think of me."

I strove with a sensation of choking.

"What! have you not a word for me?"

"I do not want to weep," I cried, and my tears came down in a storm.

"I will certainly come back next year," said the signor, "and then you will be a woman grown."

I wrung my hand away from him, and fled to my loft. The next morning at breakfast he scarcely looked at me. My father was going a journey with him, and they talked about the roads. Niccolo, who had now become merry, made faces behind the signor's back, while I stood miserably in the doorway, rubbing my chilly hands together. The travellers bade us good-bye, and Niccolo went off to his workshop; but I stood gazing drearily down the Alp.

The signor turned and came back to me.

"Buy yourself a ribbon, pretty one," he said, "when you go to the next festa."

In another moment he was gone, and I had a piece of gold in my hand. I uttered a moan of indignation, and went flying down the Alp. "Signor John! Signor John!" I cried, in a voice that must have been shrill enough to frighten the eagles.

I crushed the money into his hand, but it fell to the ground between us; and he hurried off, laughing, and looking over his shoulder. I dug the earth with my nails, and buried the gold where it lay; then fled away into the pine-brake, to weep long and fiercely. That evening Placido came back and repeated his question. I gave him a sullen "No;" and he went away more sadly than he had done before. And

then I began to get happy again, for Niccolo did not pinch me, and talked to me all about his carvings, just as before the signor came.

But my father came back from his journey with a troubled face.

"Placido has left his village," he said, "and gone to push his way in the world!"

II.

THREE years passed, and I was a staid maiden, who did not care much for festas nor gay clothes. I was not of so merry a temper as I had promised to be, and people thought I was haughty, and some of the girls disliked me. This was partly owing to Niccolo, who would say, "You need not speak to Netta, she is grown so proud: she thinks herself quite a princess since the Englishman kissed her hand!" A little thing gets one a character when gossips are by to talk. Then I did not choose to marry, and that was the worst; for though suitors might not grieve like Placido Lorez, yet no one likes to be refused, and their friends resented my coldness. So I was a lonely kind of creature, and lived in my own way, clinging fast to my father, and only vexed when he would say, "When I am dead and gone, Netta, who will take care of you and our peevish Niccolo?"

So things went on till the avalanche came down upon us, killing my poor father, and burying him in the ruins of our house. The goats and kids were killed, and Niccolo was sorely hurt; and only I, as if by miracle, escaped.

We sat for many hours on the fallen rocks, till the people from the village reached us, when they brought us down to their houses, and treated us like their own. I tried to give little trouble, for I had nothing to give them in return; nothing at all had we saved but the clothes we wore; Niccolo's arm was hurt so that he could not carve, and a woman's work is not much when she has not got a home to work in. The housewives in the village had got daughters of their own, and nobody seemed in need of a girl to help them. The worst was that nobody would love Niccolo, for, besides being utterly helpless, the lad had a biting tongue.

Placido's aged mother came out to look at me; when she saw my saddened face the tears came down her cheek.

"My girl," she said, "I have hated you, for you sent my son away, but the Lord has sent you trouble, and I must forgive you."

She brought me into her house, and I told her my bitter thoughts, and that I wanted to go down to the world where wages are given to labour.

"At Como," she said, "are the silk factories; and there is many a way of earning when one gets down to the level world. You used to play the zither, and sing a song."

"That is long ago," I said, "and the zither is buried with my father. I fear that all my music is buried with it."

"At your age the music is not hushed so quickly," she said, kindly, and pulled an old zither down from a shelf. "It used to be sweet enough," she added; "take it with my blessing. At least it may cheer your way if it puts no money in your purse. And the village shall see to your Niccolo: though it must be owned he is an imp."

So I resolved to go down to the level world, to work at the silks of Como, or at anything I could find to do. The zither was to go with me, and Niccolo was to stay at the village, till such time as I should have money to come back and fetch him.

I took my zither on my shoulder, and a wallet in my hand, and, committing myself to God, I set out on my lonely way. Niccolo limped along with me half a mile; and when we found he could go no further, we stopped on the lonely road for a last embrace. The poor lad had always loved me dearly, and his spirit was quite broken now, and he clung to me with cries. It was a moment of the cruellest anguish when I had to push him at last away from me, and to hurry away. I heard his sobs behind me for a long way as I went, and later fancied I could hear them still, in the rush of the falling river, and the faint wail of the pines.

I had passed two pretty villages along my way, and the sun had already set when I reached the third. There was a glare behind the mountains, and a warm golden haze floated in the vale. The houses came down a hill and the streets were flights of steps. Far above the roofs, and out of the chestnut-trees, rose the burning brazen cap of the campanile, and the bell was sounding lazily, as if ringing itself to sleep. The pines I had left behind me, in fringe of olive and purple, on the dusky heights: and here there were only the heavily-laden fruit-trees, chestnuts drooping over my shoulder, cherries dropping into my month, walnuts lining the roadside, and fig-bushes thrust in my path. Vines ran over the walls and upon the crimsoned roofs, and clusters of ripened grapes hung in at the

doors and windows. A cloud of silvery smoke had blent with the haze of the sunset, and there was a smell as of burning logs and fragrant food.

The next day I passed through still more villages, and got down to the flush and bloom of the Lombard plains. The mountains here became walls of a gigantic garden, vines wrapped their terraces, and melons ripened in the meadows in the midst of the corn. Plums were as lumps of gold, and the peaches glowed in the fruit-gatherer's basket, while nectarines and apricots added perfume to the coloured air. Great rows of mulberry-trees reminded me now of the silk works, and the grasshoppers sang so loud that I took them for birds.

I got on board a small sailing vessel that plied upon the lake, earning my fare by a little music, and went singing down to Como, weary, travel-soiled, and with blisters on my feet. I fell asleep in the middle of my songs, and was gently shaken awake again by the captain's merry wife. She wore a white-and-scarlet head-dress, and a large cross of gold, and crushed grapes out of a basket into her baby's laughing mouth. The gaiety here on the lake was a thing to make one stare: boats with scarlet cushions, ladies in lace mantillas, boatmen with dazzling shirts and brilliant sashes. The lake glowed with the most exquisite bluish green, and out of it rose the palaces, with terraces climbing the heights. We passed towns like straggling castles, whose streets were ladders of stone creeping up from the water; and all these wonderful novelties were to me a fantastic dream.

Giulia, the captain's wife, found me a lodging in the town of Como, a closet under a chimney, beside the room where she and her husband had their home. In order to reach this nest, I had to climb a hundred steps, which wound in and out of the houses up to the roofs. Noises roused me by three o'clock in the morning, wheels rolling, voices shouting, tambourines ringing, besides the sound of many novel kinds of music. I brushed up my dusty clothes, and went out to look at the town. The people were holding their market in the piazza of the Duomo, and tables were there set out, with provisions piled on them lavishly. The shops under the loggie were already all alive, and deep amber curtains fluttered gaily out of the arches. Flowers teemed from the dark and crooked balconies overhead, which hung like crazy cages from the upper windows. Colours were flashing everywhere; from brilliant oleander blossoms hanging like living flames in the air; from the gay dresses of the people, the piles of monster melons, the red marbles of the Broletto, and the Duomo's deeper hues.

I lifted the heavy curtain, and went into the Duomo; the mass was over, and most of the people were gone; but others kept pouring in, and the place was full. Somebody touched me on the shoulder, and I looked up with a start. Here was Placido, in the dress of a boatman!

"Netta!" he whispered, excitedly. His face was flushed, and there were tears in his eyes.

"Oh, Placido Lorez!" I cried, and gave him both my hands.

We sat on a bench and whispered in a shady corner of the church. Each had a story to tell, and each had a ready listener.

"My father is dead, Placido," I said, "and Niccolo is hurt in the Alps. I have come down here to Como to try and earn money at the silk. That is my whole story: so life is sad enough."

"I guessed it was so," said Placido. "I knew how it must be with you when I saw you crying at the mass. As for me, I have travelled far. I have stored crops and driven oxen, and helped with the vines in the south. For some months I have been a boatman here on the lake; and yesterday I had it in mind to return to the Alps. But now I believe I'll wait a bit. There's never good in haste."

"There is a captain's wife who is good to me," I said, it being now my turn again; "and she says I shall earn money by singing, for the people here in the plains are as fond of music as ourselves. I sing better than I used to do, and your mother has given me her zither."

"Little Netta!" he said, "I have made a good bit of money, and I don't like to think that you must work. I can't forget the day when you declared you could not love me, but maybe if you were to try you might change your mind. It's not that I am much to care for, but the love in my heart is strong. Who knows but that, after all, I could make you happy!"

"Placido," I said, "you are a kind man, but as I refused to marry you before when I had got a home, so I will not accept you now, because I am in need of one."

"I would not bribe you with anything but just my love," he answered, mournfully. "So if it cannot be, it can't, and I will not vex you. You must at least let me be your friend, however."

"My best friend," I said; and after that we walked hand in hand about the church, Placido showing me the pictures, and ex-

plaining what they meant, and telling me the touching stories that are painted in the jewelled windows.

The captain's wife befriended me, and people liked my music, and I could earn more money with my zither than in the factories. The people would gather round me, asking each for his favourite song, and my story got whispered among them, and they were kinder than I could tell. "She sings for a helpless brother," they said, and fees were therefore doubled as they dropped in my lap. Great people also would send for me now from their villas; and I began to save a little money.

I had to sing one evening at a palace on the lake, and it was dark when I took my seat in the verandah. The lake glittered with moonlight, and all along the terraces hung dimly-coloured lamps. A crowd of gay figures had gathered on the marble steps that led into the water. When I sang every one listened; when I ceased, I was forgotten; save that somebody went to a table and fetched me wine.

I looked up to thank this somebody, and saw the Signor John.

"Little Netta!" he exclaimed, amazed. "Can it be possible that this is you?"

"Yes, signor," I said.

"Tell me how it has happened," he asked. "What can have fetched you down out of the snows to Como?"

"My father is killed by the avalanche," I said, "and I am earning money for Niccolo, who is hurt in the Alps. It is now time for me to go, signor; good-bye!"

"Stay, I am going with you!" he said, and followed me out on the hill, carrying my zither.

"Sit down here and rest," he said, when we had gone a little way.

"But I have still to get to Como," I said, "and I want to rest in my bed."

"That is true," said the signor, smiling. "Let us then take a boat at once!"

I looked up the water, and assured myself that Placido was nowhere waiting for me. I stepped into the signor's boat, and went floating with him down the moonlit lake.

"How beautiful you have grown, Netta!" said the signor as we went. "Did I not tell you that you would be a woman when we should meet again?"

I gravely shook my head. I remembered that he had not come back, even to see if I were alive.

"You have also grown prim and cold," he added presently. "Indeed, you are so changed that I wonder how I knew you."

"It is only that one cannot always be a child," I said, sadly; and he lifted me out of the boat, and brought me to the foot of the staircase which led up to my nest in the roof. When I peered down from the top I saw him still looking up. I looked then into the glass at the face which the Signor John had called so beautiful.

"Placido never told me that I was beautiful," I reflected.

III.

After that I saw the signor every day. I had long walks on the hills with him, and many a pleasant hour on the moonlit lake. He used to meet me at the Duomo, so that I could not think of my prayers; and Giulia began to tease me, calling me a noble English dame.

"You'll not forget me and baby," she said. "You'll send us a present from England;" and I had already considered in secret about what I should send her.

I thought I should be extremely happy were it not for Placido Lorez: but his face was always before me, and his eyes had got grave and sad. His sadness troubled me so much that I tried to keep out of his way, and he soon saw that I avoided him, and was careful not to annoy me. Once when I went out on the lake with the Signor John, it happened that Placido's boat was the boat he hired. Not till I was fairly seated did I see the boatman.

Placido picked up his oars, and took his seat so that he could not see me; and never spoke a word nor moved his head. His oars dipped in the lake and scattered the shining water to right and left; but except for this sign of life he might have been taken for a man of stone. He did not even glance at me as I passed him out of the boat, but his downcast face haunted me all that night.

The next day I was tripping along by the boats on the verge of the lake; my zither perched on my shoulder, and flowers blooming in my breast; rare bright flowers, sent me that morning by the Signor John. It was far in the afternoon, when there is a glitter about the place, such a burning of colour and flashing of water, such a glow and dazzle overhead and underfoot, that sometimes one can hardly see one's way. The boats look all the same, with their crimson cushions, and with the dash, as of ink, in the water, under the side that is against the sun. The boatmen's white shirts make them also one like another, though none were so tall as Placido, nor so quiet, nor yet so strong. This time I did

not see him, however, till he put himself right in my way.

"Netta! I want to speak to you."

"Make haste then!" I said, gaily.

Placido took my hand and made me sit on the side of his boat. Before this I had rather believed in his strength than known it.

He looked at me, straight in the face, with a long wistful gaze. "You are going to meet the signor?" he said.

"Yes."

"Netta, has he asked you to be his wife?"

I said, "Not yet, Placido;" and I began to get angry.

"Netta, do you think you love him?"

I hung my head and blushed, which might mean anything.

"Dear!" he said, "you need not be angry, but you must listen to me. Gentlemen seldom marry peasant girls, though it may charm them to walk and sail with one like you. And you have yourself to look to. Don't think me selfish, for I have no wish on earth, if it be not to see you happy. If *I* could have made you happy, I would have done it; but as that is not to be—by Heaven I'll see that no one shall make you wretched!"

"I am not so easily made wretched," I said, haughtily.

Placido looked at me tenderly for a moment, and then turned away his face.

"Wicked tongues can break the purest heart," he said, softly.

I looked at him in great amazement, and then I blushed: my face blushed, and my ears, my throat, and my naked arms: and then the blood seemed to freeze within me, and my pulses got cold and still. I did not speak for a minute, but gazed on the ground and thought.

"Placido, you may look at me now," I said, presently, "for I am only going to thank you."

Then I turned and left him, and went my way. I did not flaunt so gaily, nor trip so lightly as usual. The pain in Placido's face had given me a shock.

The signor was already waiting for me up in the hills; it being now a matter of course that I should meet him there in the evenings, when we would watch the sun set redly behind the vineyards; while he talked to me all about England, and of his home where my pretty portrait now hung on the wall. I had believed that he always thought of me as future mistress of this honoured home: never thinking at all of the gulf between us. Now I sat by him silently looking down on the shining lake.

"Netta," he said, "what ails you?"

"I have been thinking of how I can tell you that I must not come here again," I said.

"Must not come here again!" he echoed. "Who has the right to prevent you?"

"Only my own will," I answered.

"Then that must bend to mine," he said, smiling, "for I cannot live without you."

A lump rose up in my throat, but I choked it down.

"Signor," I said, sadly, "I am an ignorant girl from the mountains, while you—you know the world. You might have been kinder."

He glanced quickly at my face; his brow suddenly reddened, and he turned his head away from me. So had Placido looked when he feared to pain me; only Placido had nothing to blush for: the blush had been left for me.

"There is no need to be vexed," I said, "and I did not mean to hurt you. I am going back to the town now. I shall always be proud of your friendship, Signor John."

I waited a minute patiently, but he did not move his head. I did not see any reason why I should wait or speak to him again, so I turned away, and began walking towards the town.

I heard his steps coming behind me.

"Netta!" he called.

"Well?" I said.

"Netta, will you be my wife?"

I felt a great shock of triumph. He had really said the words, and I could tell Placido; and yet somehow all the gladness had gone out of my heart. In an hour my life was changed; yet I did not know it.

I said "Yes," slowly, for I thought I loved him, and I remembered that he was a noble signor, and that in this he was very good. Placido had said truly that lords do not marry peasants; and the signor had made a sacrifice in order to win my hand. I knew that I ought to be proud of it, and yet somehow I felt ashamed. I could not forget his face when he had turned it away from me, nor the struggle which I had then witnessed, nor the wound that had been given to my pride. Surely I might be content, I thought, yet I wept that whole night through; I thought I had been a great deal happier when alone on the Alpine paths.

The signor brought me gifts; a chain for my neck, and trinkets for my ears, and a ring for my fingers, as pledge of troth. Never was a more generous lover than the Signor John. The evening after I

received them I decked myself in the jewels, and ran out into the twilight to bring my news to Placido. This friend had been away at Colico since early dawn, and I watched for his coming back from my little window up in the roof. His boat pulled into the harbour just after sunset.

"Oh, Netta! is it you?" he cried, and sprang eagerly to the beach.

I shook my head at him laughingly, and the dying flare of the sun blazed on my jewels.

"Placido, I have come to tell you about it: I am to be married this day week!"

Placido bent his head: "I thank God for your welfare," he said.

I bit my lips cruelly, and the tears sprang to my eyes. I had thought that he might have been just a little grieved.

"It is wonderful," I said, "how friends can be glad to lose one."

Placido looked at me in wonder. His face was deadly pale, and he appeared to be very tired, or to have lately suffered. Somehow I could not be satisfied, though I had come out here to triumph over him. He had thought I could be treated lightly, and I had shown him his fears were vain. He had thanked God for my happiness; and that was all.

He began now to speak cheerfully, seeing that clouds had gathered on my face.

"So you are going to be a noble lady!" he said, "in some splendid place beyond seas. Maybe in the course of years you will come back to Como."

I did not believe a word of it; it seemed all a lying tale. It was like the stories told out of the curling smoke when the logs are burning in the Alps. I stood upon a heap of sails, with my foot on the edge of the boat, my jewels flashing as the boat swayed, and my eyes on the west where the light was fading. Yes, yes, I was to be a noble lady, and to live in a foreign country with the Signor John, and there would be a very vast difference, in the days that were still to come, between me up in my high place and Placido plying his boat on the lake.

The light faded away, and the water lapped darkly at the side of the boat. My jewels ceased to flash, and there was a long, long silence, which Placido broke.

"And Niccolo?" he asked, abruptly, as if following out some train of thought.

I gave a sudden violent start, and stared at him blankly. In the midst of my excitement I had forgotten Niccolo. In arranging for my own welfare I had let my poor helpless brother slip out of my thoughts.

"The signor will take care of him," I muttered; "I will take him with me to England."

"Your signor is a generous man," returned Placido; and then I bade him good-night, and went up to my nest to think.

I sat on my bed in the dark, tossing my twinkling jewels about in my lap. The signor had gone to a ball at one of the palaces on the lake; he was dancing even at this moment with the ladies who were quite his equals, yet whom he had not found so lovable as simple me. Ah, for the sake of my love, would he be good to Niccolo? It seemed to me, as I sat there in the depths of my sore remorse, that there was no one half so dear to me as that lone, helpless creature whom people disliked and called the imp: I had promised to come back for my brother, and I vowed I would keep my word.

Next day I was earlier than I need have been at the familiar seat on the hill.

"Signor," I said, as soon as he was seated beside me.

"You must not call me 'signor,' Netta."

"Ah, I always forget. You remember my brother Niccolo?"

The signor's face clouded. "I do remember him well," he said.

"He is waiting till I return for him, up in the Alps."

"He must wait a long time, then, Netta, if you are coming with me."

"Signor!" I said, "can we not bring Niccolo with us?"

He laughed a low laugh. He did not mean to be unkind, I think; it was only that he felt amused.

"No, Netta; indeed we could not take him."

"He has no one at all but me," I said, speaking low, holding my breath.

"He must learn to do without you, then. Once for all, my pretty one, you must leave your friends behind you; though you can still provide for your brother—getting some one to take good care of him up in the mountains."

"No one loves Niccolo," I muttered, reflectively.

"Therefore you need not think me cruel," said the signor.

"Therefore I cannot leave him," I whispered.

The signor began to look angry.

"Netta!" he said, "you talk like a spoiled child. You must try to forget Italy, and that is the plain truth. It will be quite hard enough upon me——" Here he stopped.

"Yes?" I said, looking at him. "Tell me what will be hard."

"Nothing," he said, smiling again; "nothing that will not be set right when you have been a year in England."

"And have quite forgotten Italy?"

"And have almost forgotten Italy. And now, since that is settled, my Netta, tell me what you will have for a wedding gift?"

"Signor," I said, "you have already given me too much. You have, indeed, been very good to me — that I cannot forget."

"Tush, Netta! what is the matter with you?" he said. "I will give you anything you like."

I sat silent again, looking out over the water. In the distance some elegant ladies were embarking from their marble staircase. Away at the bottom of the lake towered the azure walls of the Alps, and away, further still, folded up somewhere in their royal purple, sat my sad crippled brother, my poor peevish lad, whom nobody, save myself, would ever love. Yonder, with the dainty ladies, was the place for the Signor John; mine was in the Alps, with Niccolo.

"Signor," I said at last, "I am an ignorant girl, but I have been lately thinking more than you would believe. I acknowledge that it was generous of you to ask me to be your wife, and that my love would not be worth to you all the trouble it must cost. Like should mate with like, and you and I are unlike; yet I should hardly have dared to speak had it not been for Niccolo."

The signor looked at me in amazement.

"You mean that you want to be free again, Netta."

"Yes," I said, "if you please."

"You mean to give up everything for Niccolo!"

"To-morrow I shall be on the Alps, going back for him," I said.

"Netta, you shall not jilt me!"

"No, Signor John, that would, indeed, be too saucy. You shall jilt me, if you like it better."

"This is very fine," he said, "but I shall alter your way of thinking!"

"In the mean time say good-bye, signor, for I shall not see you to-morrow."

"Good-bye, Netta, for the present."

"Good-bye, Signor John, and may God be with you!"

He had caught both my hands, as if he would not let me go; but I twisted them from him suddenly, and went running down the hill and out of his sight.

I packed up my jewels, and sent them back to their owner, who had been generous enough to give them, as though I had been fit to be his wife. My good Giulia carried them, after mourning over them for an hour, and early on the following day I went out to look for Placido.

"I've come to say good-bye, Placido. I'm off now to the Alps."

"The Alps!" cried Placido, wonderingly.

"For Niccolo," I said, brightly. "We are not going to England though. The signor is going alone."

Placido sprang from his boat with a radiant face.

"Ah, Netta! is it truth? But you shall not travel alone."

"Of course I shall travel alone. I did it before with a sadder heart."

"I am going to see my mother," said Placido. "I hope you will not object."

"Why should I object?" I said. "Your mother will be glad to see you."

"As glad as your Niccolo to see you."

"I'll take care to tell her you are coming," I said.

"You think, then, that you are likely to out-walk me?"

"What! do you mean to say that you are coming with me now?"

"I mean to be your fellow-traveller," he said, "unless you tell me truly that you would rather be alone."

I could not say that I would rather go alone, so we made our journey together back to the Alps. As we went along Placido told me much of his former journeys, and what grief he had suffered, and what dreary things he had said to himself; and I knew well that his misery had been because I could not love him. As for me, I confessed my carelessness with regard to Niccolo, and my feelings towards the English signor, which had been all made up of pride; and Placido tried to excuse me a little, and promised not to think ill of me. It was much happier travelling with him than wandering quite alone, and by the time we got near his village I was grieved that the journey was past.

We sat upon two large pine-stumps then, and looked at each other gravely. Another wind of the road would bring us within sight of friends. I had felt a strange joy in being alone in the world with Placido, and I knew by Placido's face that he liked taking care of me.

"Netta," said Placido, simply, "will you be my wife at last?"

"I wonder you ask me again," I said;

"but it would cost me far too dear to refuse you now."

So it happened that we were married in his village church, with his mother and my Niccolo, besides many friends, around us. And now we are again at Como; Niccolo, who has got stronger, is carving figures under our trees, while grandmother teaches our child to touch the zither. And Placido is not a boatman now; we live in our own vineyard, where the Signor John has been to see us, bringing his charming English bride.

As Arthur Stacey read these last words, he laid down the manuscript and looked around him. The candles were beginning to flicker in their sockets, and the end of the room was already in darkness. The wind was blowing pretty stiffly outside, and the roar of the Atlantic was more distinct than he had heard it since his arrival at Valentia. Nevertheless, Arthur thought that a turn in the fresh air would do him good; so, donning his thick coat, and ordering fresh candles to be lit ready for his return, he sallied forth and faced the storm.

Naturally enough, as it seemed to him, he turned his steps toward the office, with the intention of availing himself of the permission which had been accorded him of seeing the Slaves at work. Mr. Gay was in his room as Arthur entered the hall, and the door being open, he looked up, and, pushing aside the papers over which he had been poring, accompanied the visitor into the temple of the Lamp.

There it was, ever burning brightly, and ever assiduously watched. They stood behind, the Slave sitting, as usual, with his eyes intent on the paper screen, but the spot of light remained steady and motionless. Scarcely, however, had they turned aside to chat at the fireplace when their attention was attracted by the movement of the light, now to the left, now to the right of the centre line, and by the Slave's saying:

"New York tells Heart's Content that an Englishman named Cameron, who says he is a friend of Mr. Gay's, is in their office, talking to the superintendent. Heart's Content thinks Mr. Gay might like to know this, so sends it on."

"Cameron is probably there about your business, Mr. Stacey," said Mr. Gay, in a low tone. "If you wait here a few minutes I have no doubt we shall have further information."

So Arthur Stacey waited and waited, but the Lamp revealed nothing that had the smallest interest for him. Incessantly went on the work of the two Slaves, the one reading, the other recording messages of every conceivable kind; messages in French, and German, and English, messages in cipher, messages in brokers' language, to the outer world as unintelligible as cipher, domestic messages, diplomatic messages, and messages of life and death; but to Arthur Stacey the Lamp spoke no more. Tired of waiting for further news from Cameron, after a short time Arthur Stacey bade Mr. Gay good-night, taking with him the superintendent's promise that any message in which he was interested should be at once conveyed to him.

He had intended to go to bed on his return, but the thought that there might be news from Stewart Cameron had put all such ideas to flight. He must be up to hear it when it came, and he must divert his mind until it did come; so he mixed himself a smoking tumbler of whisky-punch, pulled the fresh-lighted candles towards him, and commenced the perusal of the next manuscript, which bore the strange title of—

THE LAST TENANTS OF HANGMAN'S HOUSE.

They came no one knew whence, and they lived no one knew how; for though she was evidently a lady born and bred, and more delicate than most, yet they had no servant but Molly Hartland, the shock-headed "maid" of old Jem living in the mud cottage under the cliff; and she went only by chance times, and not for long together; she never stayed a night in the house, nor saw more of it than the kitchen where she did her "chores" in her rough way, and then left. They had come quite suddenly one wild October night, and had taken possession of Hangman's House—a dilapidated old place, which had got its name from one of its former possessors, who, suspected of treachery by his comrades, had been hunted like a rat and caught in the loft, and his body left hanging on an improvised gallows out of the window. Since then it had earned but evil repute, now for smugglers, now for spectres; with darker tales still of belated travellers or shipwrecked men who had been seen to go in, but never to come out; for all those terrible half-mythic crimes which are sure to centre in a long disused house standing desolate on a wild coast. And there these latest tenants had lived ever since their arrival, a year or so agone now, buying nothing but

such food as was absolutely necessary; and sometimes having Molly to do such work as the lady was physically incapable of doing. They had no visitors; they never received a letter; they called themselves Capstone, and were man and wife, though they looked more like father and daughter. For he was a good twenty years older than she, and she seemed to have more fear of him than goes with wifely love of the right sort.

He was a tall, lean man, with sloping shoulders, a hatchet face, sucked-in leathery cheeks, and a large hooked nose like the beak of a bird of prey; his eyes were small and of a fiery red, sunk deep beneath heavy brows, the coarse light hairs of which fell over them like the thatch of a pent-house; his thin lips were set into a perpetual smile, more subtle than the most open sneer; his straw-coloured hair hung evenly all round from the centre of his head; and his long and bony hands had curved fingers and pointed nails, which, to carry the resemblance still further, were also like the talons of a bird of prey. His manner, when by chance he spoke to any one—and always to his wife—was of exquisite politeness; but Lilian had learned to dread his politeness more than his wrath. Indeed it was his wrath; for the more anger he felt the more suavity he showed, and the more cruelty he practised.

For the wife herself, poor Lilian, she was just such a one as is doomed by nature to be a victim. With very little judgment, and of varying mood, being sometimes timid to abjectness, and at others bold to rashness, never seeing when to yield or when to oppose, and her opposition always ending in tears and obedience, she was all that such a man as her husband could desire in his creature. And as all he needed was a creature, not a companion, he was well enough suited, with one whom he might use as he would without any fear of enduring resistance. Without any fear either of untoward protection; for Lilian was an orphan, and her only brother had gone away to sea many years ago now, and had never since been heard of. So, if not dead, he was as good as dead; and as, for sufficient reasons, Mr. Capstone had covered up all traces of his removal to Cornwall, there was not much chance, if ever Fred should turn up again, of his finding his sister under another name and in such a place as Hangman's House, out by Michael's Run. Wherefore, the lean man with the hooked nose and the curved fingers wrought his will, unchecked by the fear of God or the law of man.

Mr. Capstone had been about a year at Hangman's House, and the rough October weather had come round again, when a cry went up that a ship, caught between the two headlands, was drifting into the bay. The tide was running high, and a strong west wind was blowing straight in shore; black and Titanic rose the sharp and broken line of cliffs; long reefs, sunken, treacherous, ran far into the sea; while here and there huge rocks reared themselves out from the foam, like savage sentinels, barring all ingress into a bay as threatening, fierce, and deadly as themselves. It was a coast where was no mercy for any wandering boat, no way of escape for any drowning man; it was the cruellest bit of coast in all that cruel line, and it had cost more lives than any other spot; it was the terror of every seaman who had to pass that way, and the current set so strong in shore that ships steered far out to sea, and a sail was scarcely ever seen on the horizon. When one did appear it was mostly for doom.

On came the ship, blown right out of her course, her helm useless, her smaller spars gone, caught by the wind and the tide, and driven madly in shore. Already she had lost some of her men, washed overboard; but some were still left, whom the watchers on the cliffs could see, lashed to the rigging. The whole district had collected on the cliffs. The two coast-guards nearest at hand, and the men who, but for them, would have been wreckers of the old stamp, women and children, all were there; some to save and some to spoil; and among them was the lean, lank figure of the tenant of Hangman's House, with his pale wife on his arm.

The ship came drifting on, plunging into the waves and rising out again with a shudder like some creature in agony, flung from reef to reef as the waves lifted her and the wind carried her onward; till at last she came grinding on to the Lion Rock in the middle of the bay. There was no life-boat belonging to Michael's Run, and even if there had been one, she could not have lived in such a sea; but the coast-guards fired a couple of rockets, one of which fell short, and the other struck true. A tall man, who had been holding on gallantly, took the cord. He pushed aside a comrade who seemed to dispute it, and the weaker fell into the sea, while the stronger lashed the cord round him, and gave the signal to pull in shore.

"Good," said Mr. Capstone, applaudingly; "that fellow understands business."

He had no sooner cleared the deck than

the mainmast fell, and in less than two minutes after, the ship fell to pieces like a toy puzzle, and only a mass of broken firewood showed where she had been. Not a man on board was saved except the one who had seized the rope and lashed it round him; and he was hauled in, senseless now, close to where the Capstones stood. He was a swarthy man, in the prime of life; that was all Lilian saw: when her husband, touching him lightly with his foot, turned to Molly Hartland and said, "Here, Molly, the sea has brought you a lover. Take him to my house, you fellows; I'll have him."

"Be advised, sir," put in Molly's father, old Jem, "there's no good in taking a man into your house as is washed up from the sea.

Save a stranger from the sea,
And he'll turn your enemy.

That's what we say hereaway, sir, and there's the story of Cruel Coppinger to bear us out."

But Mr. Capstone only laughed till his red eyes were nearly lost behind the straw-coloured thatch above them, as he answered, turning his back on Jem, "I'll dare the saying, my man. Here, fellows! haul him along to Hangman's House; we'll soon bring him to his senses again; and I'll give you a sovereign to drink his health and hurt your own."

The shipwrecked man was a magnificent fellow to look at, tall, dark, and powerfully built, with a face absolutely faultless for manly beauty, and yet a face at which women would involuntarily shudder, and which no man would like to trust; a face which, speechless and lifeless as the man was, marked a nature at once desperate and resolute, bold, lawless, and determined. He was not the kind of man of whom a creature could be made, thought Lilian; what then did her husband want with him? She, who knew the guilty secret of their lives, knew also the necessity of keeping prying eyes out of it. What could they do with a man like this castaway admitted among the crimes that had to be hidden? Or was the guilt to be passed on to another? at once shared and multiplied?

Reckless of the consequences so sure to follow on her opposition, Lilian turned to her husband with a shuddering appeal.

"Do not take this man into the house!" she said, earnestly. "Hear me for once—do not."

"What, my love, after all my lessons?" said Mr. Capstone, with a smile, taking her arm with a caressing gesture.

The pale fair woman shrunk away, blenched, and put up her left hand to wipe away the drops that started on her upper lip; but she said no more; and they both turned away from the crowd, none of whom saw the blood that trickled down her arm. At night, when she took off her gown, there were four sharp cuts where her husband had clasped her arm so affectionately, and dug his talons into her flesh.

For such a turbulent-looking man, it was wonderful how easily this castaway slipped into his place in the dull life at Hangman's House. No one could have been more tractable, or apparently more contented; and Mr. Capstone daily congratulated himself on the good luck which had cast his guest up in Michael's Run. He was no common sailor with hard and horny hands; he was a Spanish artist, a man accustomed to engrave on metal, and he had some knowledge of chemicals and casting. And as Mr. Capstone could speak Spanish, and Lilian could not, and as Manuel, as he called himself, could not speak English, he was no restraint on any one. The two men talked as they pleased without betraying to the woman what they wished to keep secret; and Mr. Capstone said what he would to Lilian, and threatened her with his polite air and affectionate smile, without the fact of Manuel's sitting there at the bench, engraving, being any check on him.

From the first Manuel superseded Lilian in the work she had been accustomed to do for her husband. He knew what he was about; better even than Mr. Capstone himself; and so was of more use than the nervous, uncertain, hysterical little wife; and one day, when he had specially pleased his employer, Mr. Capstone turned round to Lilian sitting idly crouched over the fire, saying, with a smile:

"My love, I begin to find you insupportable. My ruffian here can do all that you did, and ten times more; and it irritates me to see your pale sickly face, and those idle hands doing nothing. I must find employment for my own, my dear, if yours are so useless; and—get rid of you altogether."

And when he said this, he bent his face to hers, as if to kiss her, with an expression in his eyes that froze her very blood.

He was standing with his back to Manuel, and Lilian had turned her face towards him. Suddenly she saw the Spaniard's eyes fixed on her. As a rule he never looked at her; seemed to be hardly aware of her existence; save with

the most curt formality of politeness took no notice of her; but now, when she caught his black eyes fixed upon her, she saw before her the chance of another peril, almost worse than those already surrounding her. She would have rather read the deadliest hatred in those flaming eyes than what she did read. And so audaciously expressed, too! It was almost as if he had known what Mr. Capstone had said, and had invited her to take refuge in his love against the persecution of her husband.

Frightened Lilian, making some kind of muttered excuse, rose and left the room; running down-stairs into the kitchen, which until then had been her own poor sanctuary. She was standing there by the fireplace, all trembling, when the door quietly opened and Manuel stole in with a noiseless step. It was rare that Mr. Capstone left him a moment alone. Under one pretext or another he kept him always by his side.

Lilian's heart stood still for terror when she saw who it was that thus stole into her darkness. He came up to her, swift, stealthy, noiseless as a panther, his eyes flaming, his bronzed face instinct with passion; and when he was near her he caught her in his arms like a wild beast springing on its prey. Her fair hair broke loose and fell in long, soft waves over her face and breast; he kissed her hair, and he kissed the pale face greedily, roughly, harshly.

"I love you," he said in perfectly good English; "I will protect you, for I will kill him, and then you shall be mine."

"Good Heavens!" cried Lilian, shrinking from him; but he held her tight. "You are an Englishman!"

"I am nothing but the man who loves you," said Manuel, kissing her again; she would rather he had stabbed her.

"He must know!" she cried.

"If you betray me I will kill both him and you," said Manuel, coolly. "Don't be a fool, pretty Lilian; you are one, but I love you nevertheless. I have given you my secret; I know you can keep secrets; but, by all the saints in heaven, if you betray me, you shall repent it! I love you, my pale Lily, but I am not so mad as to put my life in peril for you. If one of us has to go, it shall be you; but it shall be neither. Another kiss. Peste! You refuse? Then I will take it. Adios, little girl. You are mine remember, and I will kill him for you; but, silence! else——!" And, with a peculiar gesture, Manuel dropped her into a chair, and glided from the kitchen as noiselessly as he had entered it.

So now Lilian had a secret to keep from her husband, as she had had his to keep from others through all those painful years.

The work went on, and went on well.

"That fool of a Spaniard is putting his neck into a fine noose," said Mr. Capstone to his wife, smiling across to Manuel as he took up his last plate, and examined it microscopically; Manuel taking no heed of his words, but quietly resting his head on his hand, while he looked at his employer patiently.

Still smiling, and in the same voice, Mr. Capstone continued in Spanish:

"My good Manuel, you are invaluable. You shall share like my brother; you are my more than brother—friend!"

On which Manuel smiled too, sedately, and replied that if his preserver and benefactor was pleased, all was well.

"When I have got what I want from him," said Mr. Capstone in English, with the most affectionate look and accent towards the Spaniard, "I shall give him up to the police, or get rid of him in some other way. He must be a fool to think I would trust him! I was saying, my friend," he went on, in Spanish this time, "that you have been a very treasure to me, and that I can never be too grateful for the work you have done. Courage! a few days more, and it will be completed!"

"Good!" said Manuel, quietly.

Lilian stood quivering in every limb. True, she loved neither of these men, but she feared for fear's sake, if not for love's. And then she herself was so desperately involved on all sides; but worst of all by her knowledge of Manuel's secret, and his cognisance of how much her husband was betraying him. What a nest of crime it all was! There was not one wholesome part in it.

After repeated trials, at last a perfect plate was produced. The imitation was not to be detected by the keenest expert living: for had not the clever thief and forger got some of the Bank paper? and was he not, therefore, master of the situation? His false gold, too, was to the hair's-breadth of balance. To be sure he could not counterfeit the ring; but, save the ring, all was right: and with the paper he could make play securely.

"And now," said Mr. Capstone, expanding his narrow chest, as the three were assembled round the fire on the evening of the day of success: "to leave this old rat's castle and enjoy life afresh!"

"Afresh!" said Lilian, with a weak kind of scorn.

"Would you think it afresh if I were to efface myself, and give you up to this black-headed ruffian?" asked Mr. Capstone, smiling, and putting his head on one side amiably.

"Hush! For God's sake do not say such things!" cried Lilian, turning paler than usual. Then she flushed to the very roots of her hair, and her husband looked at her curiously.

"He is a good-looking ruffian enough," he said, blandly. "Shall I make you over to him?"

"I will leave the room if you talk so," said Lilian, angrily; and she rose from her chair. But he laid his curved fingers on her arm.

"You will do nothing of the kind, my lady," he said. "You will wait for as long as I choose, and you shall hear what I choose. I begin to suspect you. Aha! Have you been looking over the fence, my lady?—making eyes, hey? thinking of handsome ruffians o' nights? This must be seen to. You and he together. By the Lord, but you'll smart for it! The score is running, upon my soul it is. No matter. I can pay it."

Lilian saw the Spaniard's face.

"Let me go," she said, faintly. "Oh God! let me go."

"My love, you are inconvenient," said her husband, pushing her down in her chair, while he played with her long hair. "Sit where you are, and be good company. It is an auspicious time; let us celebrate it."

The black December night was sharp and keen. The moon had not yet risen, and the sky was overcast with heavy clouds. Not a star shone above, not a light twinkled below; the whole land and sea, and heaven together, gave not the faintest sign of life; only a cruel wind, whistling through the crannies, and blustering round the house, fierce as on the day when Manuel was cast up from the sea.

"A glass of wine, for the good result of the day," then said Mr. Capstone, with sudden vivacity, rising, and taking glasses and a bottle from a locked cupboard in the room.

During all their late talk Manuel had been sitting in a lounging, careless manner, his legs stretched out, his hands folded in each other, his chin on his breast, apparently half asleep. The firelight flickered on his face, and Lilian saw just one narrow glittering line beneath his eyelids, which showed that he was awake, and watching. Mr. Capstone was, for him, somewhat slow and clumsy at that cupboard. He drew the cork of the bottle, and they heard him drink and smack his lips.

"The primest port that was ever grown," he said, enthusiastically. "Here, Manuel, rouse up, my friend, and drink to our joint fortune! There are but two glasses left."

"I won't drink to-night," said Manuel, sleepily "I am feverish."

"Tut, tut! such wine as this will drive both care and fever away," urged Mr. Capstone. "No fear of that," he added in English.

"I tell you no," said the Spaniard, doggedly. "You English can pour molten lead down your throats. But your vile stuff that you pay your guineas for is hateful to us who know what true wine is. Drink yourself, and let me be."

"As you wish, my friend; I would not press you against your will," said Mr. Capstone, amiably. "That cursed dog, he shall repent this," he said to Lilian, looking kindly at Manuel, as if he were telling her what they had been saying together.

But Manuel took no notice. He still sat stretched out before the fire, looking three parts asleep, and wholly indifferent.

Suddenly he roused himself.

"Let me drink," he said, holding out his hand.

Mr. Capstone gave him the wine with alacrity.

Manuel put it to his lips.

"Pah!" he said, disdainfully. "You call this wine? It is only fit for hogs." And he emptied it into the fireplace. "Now," he said, "you will let me sleep."

"Ill-mannered hound," said Mr. Capstone, "your tether is nearly out. Here, you pale wretch, drink this," to Lilian, with a smile. "It is too good to waste on such as you, but I am in a jolly good humour to-night, and I will indulge you. That fool there has done the trick, so I don't mind throwing away a glass of wine on you. Here! drink it, I say; and see if you cannot look less like a ghost than you do."

Was Manuel dreaming? As Lilian raised the glass to her lips, he started up, shouting something in Spanish, and flung out his arms, striking the glass, which fell in fragments at his feet.

"Thousand pardons to the señora," he said, rubbing his eyes. "By the saints I was dreaming, and a pretty dream they sent me!"

"Don't mention it," said Mr. Capstone quite amiably. "An accident: who can prevent that?" Then turning to his wife, "Well, my love, you have lost your wine;

your lover's doing, not mine, remember. Never mind, you will sleep soundly enough without it. And now to bed, and—don't wake."

Lilian rose without remonstrance.

"Kiss me," said Mr. Capstone. "Kiss me, Lily," very tenderly.

"No," said Lilian, abruptly, "I will not."

The Spaniard was standing before the fire now, and she saw his hand move into his bosom and clutch at something.

"I wish I had never seen you in my life!" burst out Lilian. "I wish I had died before I had married you."

"Gently, gently, my love, you forget the consequences," said her husband, in a soothing voice. "Don't be so impatient, dear. The ruffian's turn will come perhaps."

Manuel, standing before the fire in a brown study, smiled and nodded to himself, soliloquising. "Yes," he said to himself aloud. "By the saints! yes."

Lilian fled, while Mr. Capstone laughed; but as she turned she met the Spaniard's eyes: just one glance; but that one glance was enough, both for him and for her.

"Pretty little playful kid!" said Mr. Capstone in Spanish, kissing his hand to her as she disappeared; but Manuel did not take up the ball. He only smiled in a quiet kind of amiable approval.

After she had gone the two men fell a-thinking. They were both silent, looking into the fire; both thinking the same thing, and meditating on the best way. At last Mr. Capstone, giving himself a shake as a dog might, reared up his lank lean figure, and looked about him.

"How strange it is," he said, musingly, "the regret one feels when one has come to the last of a thing. Here is the last of this old rat's castle where I have enjoyed such a quiet time of love and happiness with my Lilian—the last night—it oppresses me. I have keen perceptions of beauty, and I have enjoyed the beauty here."

"Where?" asked Manuel, simply.

"On the cliffs. I have a mind to see the old place once more. What say you, my friend?"

"It's a wild night," said the Spaniard, reluctantly. "Dark, is it not?"

"No, the moon is up now. The sea will look grand. Come."

"I don't see the delight," said Manuel, still reluctant.

Mr. Capstone laughed. "Afraid?" he said.

"Afraid, no! But you English are for weather as for wine; nothing is too strong for you. However, I'll come," and he buttoned up his jacket, but left the middle buttons open, where he could thrust in his hand.

"Thanks—a minute," said Mr. Capstone, as he left the room.

As he left Manuel drew out a dagger and tried its point. "It will settle his business, I think," he muttered, grimly. But he kept a watchful eye on the door while he opened, with a false key, the desk where Mr. Capstone kept that roll of bank paper and the fine steel engraved plates.

Meanwhile the master, in his private room, looked at the chambers of his revolver.

"If necessary, sufficient," was his comment. Then he went up to Lilian's garret door, which he locked, and put the key in his pocket, saying to himself: "The fool! I wished to spare her, and he spoilt my plan. What a curse it is that people will not do as they ought!" All of which he half said, half thought, as he was arranging a lighted candle in a staircase cupboard filled with tarred rope, shavings, and the like. Then he went down-stairs, humming an opera tune gaily.

"For our last walk!" he said, airily.

"Yes, for our last," repeated Manuel, quietly.

They took the way of the cliffs right over the Gauger's Path, where once, it was said, Coppinger had got an over-brave and zealous gauger in his boat, had laid his head on the gunwale, and had deliberately chopped it off with a hatchet. It was a wild place, where the cliffs had split asunder, leaving a chasm as clean, and black, and smooth as if it had been scooped out by a knife. By this time the wind had fallen, and the moon had come out, so that the chasm yawning at their feet was distinctly visible. The two men walked in an even line together, each careful not to give the other half a foot's pace in advance. Manuel was to the right, and had taken Mr. Capstone's arm, thus leaving his own right arm free, the hand thrust into his breast. But then he had only a dagger, and the other might use a revolver with his left hand to advantage.

"Peste!" cried Mr. Capstone, stopping suddenly on the very edge of the chasm, and hastily withdrawing his arm.

In an instant Manuel had swung him a few steps backwards, and in doing so faced him, and faced Hangman's House. Flames were creeping out of the windows, and the smoke was rising in dense clouds.

"Wretch!" he cried in English, "you have set fire to the house, and left her to be burnt alive!"

"What! a traitor!" exclaimed Mr. Capstone, reeling back, and raising his hand.

The moonlight shone on the barrel of a pistol; there was a click, a flash, a report, and the ball had grazed the Spaniard's cheek; but before the man could fire a second time Manuel had leaped upon him, borne him to the earth, and buried his knife to the hilt in his side.

"And you thought you were deceiving me?" he hissed, as he knelt on the dying man. "You thought you were making a tool of me? getting my neck in a noose, ha! while your own was to go free? Miserable dog! it is I—the black-haired ruffian, who used you; I who have been master throughout, who will have your wife, and your money, and who, up to this last moment, when you thought to throw me down that pit where I will throw you, have played with you, and foiled you!"

"Mercy, mercy!" sobbed the dying man. "My good Manuel, mercy, dear friend—pity!"

"The same mercy that you have had on her!" said the Spaniard, between his teeth.

He raised himself from the bleeding body, met the glassy eyes as they were fixed on him with the yearning look of death and despair; then, laughing harshly, he kicked him over where he lay, and flung him with his foot down the chasm. He heard the heavy fall of the body as it struck against the smooth sides; then a splash in the sea; and all was still.

Swift as an Indian he ran back to the house, just as Lilian appeared at the loft window in her white gown, her fair hair streaming over her shoulders; looking, in the moonlight, more like an angel than a woman. The sight of her burnt the Spaniard's heart, and convulsed it with pain. What if he could not save her! He *must* save her; he would; he had vowed that she should be his, and he would keep his vow though the very elements opposed! He rushed into the house, and through the stifling smoke; braving the sly creeping tongues of flame that were licking up the wall. He came to her door, which the fire had not yet touched. Before she had time to realise that it was he whom she had seen crossing the grass in the moonlight, her garret door was flung open, and Manuel, blackened with smoke and crimsoned with blood, had her in his arms.

"Now you are mine!" he said, "I have killed him."

"Heaven protect me!" cried Lilian, covering her eyes with her hands.

"I am better than Heaven," said Manuel, "and I will protect you." He kissed her passionately. "Lilian! Lilian! say that you love me!" he cried. "By the saints, if you do not, I will fling you into the flames and let you perish!"

He lifted her up in his arms, and hers fell round his neck as her hair fell over his face.

"Yes, I love you," she said, and fainted.

Manuel could never tell how he got out of the burning house, with that lifeless woman in his arms. It seemed to him as if nothing could have hurt him; and so, through smoke and fire, he bore the pale fair woman he loved, and laid her on the grass in the quiet moonlight. But when he flung himself down by her, and took her head on his knee, and called to her to look up and thank him by her love for her life, it was more the howl of a wild beast than the cry of a man which burst from his lips. She was dead.

When the neighbourhood was roused, as at last it was, by the news that Hangman's House was all ablaze, they came upon a strange sight. On the grass, some little distance from the house, her long rich silky hair spread smoothly out, her hands laid tenderly across her breast, and a pale December rose placed within them, lay poor Lilian, where the flames could not touch her, nor the falling rafters strike her. Not a trace of the master nor of the stranger was to be found; but some days after there was washed up by the tide the lank lean figure of the man they had known as Mr. Capstone, of Hangman's House, with a gaping knife wound in his side.

Not long after this there flashed into London society a stranger, rich, handsome, reckless, who seemed to have come from the clouds; a stranger whom mothers courted for their daughters, and to whom fathers and brothers gave their honest hands; a stranger who could speak many languages, and who was an accomplished artist, and who had travelled to all parts of the world. But who, when any one by chance spoke of Cornwall, and asked him if he knew that coast, used to aver with some warmth that he did not, and had no wish to know it.

And again, not long ago, a man who might have been that stranger's twin brother, was to be seen at Toulon, wearing

the bullet and the chain, under sentence of hard labour for twenty years, for homicide, where he had not been to blame. But in his indictment of crimes committed on French soil, no mention was made of the body which was washed ashore near Michael's Run in Cornwall, with a knife wound in its side; of the fair-haired woman laid on the grass near the burning ruins of Hangman's House; nor of the forged bank-notes by which that brief and brilliant season of London splendour and Parisian gaiety was maintained. And the man, being a philosopher in his way, used to smile to himself as he pondered on the difference there is between the things which are known and punished in the life of a man, and the things which are concealed and bear no harvest of shame; and how the latter are so frequently the worst of all!

"That's a 'horror,'" said Arthur, as he finished the story, "probably by Grimmer, if he writes up to his name."

The next manuscript, docketed "Something light," was called—

THE HEAVENLY TWINS.

Old Mr. Blissett's official career was carried on in the City; he was the tenant of chambers in Laurence Pountney-lane. His private life was passed in a comfortable house situate on the eastern side of Tavistock-square. He was by profession a solicitor, and enjoyed an excellent practice. He was reported to be worth a good deal of money. I was one of his articled clerks.

He was a pleasant-looking, clear-complexioned, blue-eyed old gentleman, with a pink bald head, and very white whiskers. He was fond of wearing stiff check cravats and capacious buff waistcoats. A heavy gold-rimmed eye-glass was wont to be suspended round his neck by a ribbon so broad, that it looked almost like a decoration or badge of some rare order of knighthood. His figure inclined to that redundancy of portliness which is yet not accounted uncomely in a man advanced in years. He carried his corpulence, for so it must in truth be described, with ease and dignity, almost with grace.

As a solicitor he prospered, of course, by the litigation of others, but he was himself a man of peaceful nature and friendly disposition. Even to the prejudice of his own interests as a professional man he was given to advising conciliatory measures to his clients. He would constantly intervene in disputed cases to recommend a compromise, or, as he preferred to phrase it, "an amicable adjustment," involving, naturally, payment of costs. He was altogether a comfortable man to have to deal with, and he had obtained great popularity from a considerable public. He was respected on all hands. The Lord Chancellor returned his bow with peculiar cordiality. With certain of the puisne judges Mr. Blissett was almost on nodding terms. The bar shook hands with him heartily.

That Mr. Blissett was deeply learned in the law, I do not believe. He had entered the profession at a time when it did not stoop to test the acquirements of its members by such inquisitorial processes as "exams" at the Law Institution. He conducted his business on very simple principles. He invariably took counsel's opinion on every case submitted to him. His chambers were provided with a handsome library of law books bound in the regulation sheepskin turned up with crimson; but I never knew him consult one of those portentous volumes, or read anything, indeed, save only his letters and the newspaper. His articled clerks, I can confidently assert, he made no pretence at instructing. I, George Stack, was, as I have said, one of those legal subalterns, or solicitors in embryo. The other was James Sparrow, a young gentleman from the West of England. Mr. Blissett had duly accepted the liberal premiums stated, in our respective articles of clerkship, to be the consideration for his educating us in the mysteries of his profession. But it had seemed to him that he fulfilled his covenants in that respect when he turned us loose in his office, like lambs in a meadow, with liberty to browse as best we might. We were much as the other clerks, except that they were paid for their services, while we paid for the privilege of serving. We were made generally useful and performed multifarious duties. We did much copying, posted letters, carried blue-bags full of papers hither and thither, ran errands, and occasionally served writs. Certainly our official performances were not of a distinguished kind, while the science of our calling was quite a sealed book to us. If we were found, moved by ambitious impulses, snatching a scrap of learning from the pages of Stephen's Blackstone, let us say, Mr. Blissett immediately judged that we were wasting time, and lacked occupation. Forthwith he would hand us an affidavit in Chancery, or some such refreshing document, with instructions to copy it as neatly as might be, in fair engrossing hand, by a given

time. Some degree of legal practice we might by chance acquire in Mr. Blissett's office, but the spirit, philosophy, and history of our profession were things withheld from us as idle, needless, vain, if not, indeed, absolutely deleterious subjects of study.

Once a month, however, Mr. Blissett so far recognised his sense of the value of our premiums, if not of our services, and testified the respect he entertained, if not for us, then for our parents, as to invite us to dinner in Tavistock-square. And very good dinners, I am bound to say, he gave us. He was an admirable host, and he entertained us capitally. True, the happiness we enjoyed was not unleavened by headaches; but we—Jim Sparrow and I—were at a period of life when the penalties incurred by excess of pleasure, or the indiscreet pursuit of enjoyment, are lightly borne. And then if headaches came of the Tavistock-square banquets, there resulted also heartaches—and, upon the principle of homœopathy or of counter-irritation, there seemed good prospect that these two maladies would eventually subdue each other, and leave us, the patients, in tolerably sound condition again.

Our headaches I have sufficiently accounted for. Our heartaches arose thus. Mr. Blissett had two daughters; so of course Sparrow and I fell desperately in love with them. I say "of course," not simply because time out of mind it has been the bounden duty of all apprentices to fall in love with their masters' daughters, but for the further reason, that it seemed to me quite impossible, once having seen the Miss Blissetts, to refrain from yielding to an enduring and all-absorbing passion for them. They were—I am still prepared to maintain—perfectly and bewitchingly lovely. They were twin sisters, and their father's only children. Their sponsors, at their baptism, had named them Eleanor and Elizabeth. These appellations affection had changed or condensed into Nelly and Elly respectively. Their mother was no more. Her place in Mr. Blissett's household was supplied by his sister, a spinster lady of mature years, Miss Columba Blissett. Of this lady it is by no means my desire to speak censoriously. She was, I am persuaded, thoroughly kind-hearted and well-intentioned, strong in her sense of the duty she owed to her nieces. She always held that she was as good as a mother to them. There it seemed to me she overstated her case. A mother is anxiously watchful over the interests and welfare of her young, but is yet not unprepared to consider the time when they will no longer need her fostering care, but will take flight from the shelter of her wings, and establish independent nests of their own. She will eye their proposed mates judicially, but will not object to their pairing in due season. I have even heard of mothers who have schemed to expedite the marrying of their offspring. But Miss Columba had quite other views of maternal duties. She protected her charges something too much. She guarded them from evil and from good alike. She warded off lovers from them; she flung cold water, and plenty of it, upon the flames they kindled; she voted admiration folly; love-making preposterous. And thus hindering courtship, she went far to render matrimony impossible.

The love of Sparrow and myself for Elly and Nelly Blissett thus met with difficulties at the very outset. But this was only to be expected, and in the nature of things. Nor was it wholly disagreeable to us. It was as those bitter drinks which, not in themselves very palatable, yet stimulate appetite and give relish to an entertainment.

Our opportunities of meeting the Miss Blissetts were not at first very frequent, being limited mainly to our monthly dinners in Tavistock-square. By-and-bye we ascertained the direction of the young ladies' walks, and notably on Sundays, with an absurd affectation of accident, we met them. They were invariably under the guardianship of Miss Columba; but it was part of our plan to occupy, by turns, the attention of the aunt, and by turns to enjoy the society of the nieces.

I have said that the Miss Blissetts were lovely. I need add little in the way of enhancing this description of them. Their forms were sylph-like; their movements most graceful. Their golden hair fell about them in clouds of spiral ringlets; their complexions were a dazzling combination of milk (country milk) and blush-roses; their eyes a turquoise blue; their lips a coral red; their noses—— But there is something odious about thus attempting to catalogue, with an auctioneer's accuracy, the infinite charms and graces of these divine young ladies. I forbear. I was not a man in possession. They were not taken in execution.

The twin sisters were wonderfully and fatally alike. There was really no saying, with any degree of confidence, which was Elly, which was Nelly, and, as though to defy distinction, they invariably dressed

alike; their favourite colour being a heavenly blue. How Sparrow and I first came to decide that *he* loved Nelly and that *I* loved Elly, why *I* did not rather love Nelly and *he* Elly, I have difficulty at this distance of time in stating. There was really no choice. Perhaps we left chance—the turn of a halfpenny—to decide for us.

"They really ought to be ear-marked," Sparrow would sometimes say, desperately. (He came from a sheep-breeding district.) But while admitting his own difficulties in the case, he was apt to be acrimonious in charging me with want of perception. He said that I had invaded his rights and transferred my affections from Elly to Nelly. I denied it. I avowed that I adored Elly, that I should never cease to adore her, that she was dearer to me than life itself, and much more to the same effect. "Then why squeeze Nelly's hand as you did last night?" he demanded. He had seen me do it, he added. I maintained that it was Elly's hand that I had squeezed. Sparrow made himself disagreeable. He snorted and tossed his head. We came near to quarrelling outright. He talked *at* me, involving me, as he was sometimes fond of doing, in a vague and general charge against "fellows." "If fellows ain't true to each other," he would say, "how can they expect other fellows to be true to them? But fellows are so selfish. I hate fellows who ain't open and above-board with me. I've known fellows have their heads punched for less." I asked him plainly if he was referring to me. He replied evasively, that fellows who found caps that fitted them had better wear them. I said that the cap did not fit me. So for a time the discussion closed. I did not want to quarrel with Sparrow. He was sometimes peevish and petulant, but on the whole he was a very good fellow. He was the confidant of my love, as I was of his. We were bound to each other by treaty and by self-interest. For if one failed, when his turn came for that duty, to engage the attention of Miss Columba, what chance had the other of approaching and laying siege to the twins?

I have suggested that our courtship had its difficulties. Miss Columba avoided, it was rare to find the sisters apart. They were as twin roses grafted on one stem. They were almost inseparable. They were never so happy as when permitted to appear twined together, their arms wreathed round each other's waists, and constituting a group that Sparrow and I found to be quite maddening in its exquisite grace and beauty. And to make love to Nelly while Elly was so close at hand, or vice versâ, was certainly trying to the lover, taxed severely his powers of speech and strength of nerve. His passion-fraught words might move Nelly to tears; but what if they stirred Elly to laughter? Believe me, it's arduous work wooing twins. Happily they were parted at dinner-time, occupying seats on either hand of their father. And sometimes there were other guests who unconsciously aided us in sundering the sisters. We disliked these other guests as a rule, however—pronouncing them rivals.

How their relations managed I cannot say. I don't think they really knew the twins apart, but only pretended to do so. Old Mr. Blissett, I'm pretty sure, had but the vaguest notions as to which was Nelly, which Elly. But it didn't matter to him. He called them each "pet," and so surmounted all difficulty about their names. He kissed them both alike. They both kissed him. What more could he want?

Sparrow and I went on loving, and talking to each other of our loves. I confess I found him prosy and tiresome; he told the story of his affections at such undue length—went into so much needless detail—and I thought it really ungenerous of him to yawn when in my turn, but expressing myself far more happily, I set forth my passion and enumerated my emotions. Still we greatly enjoyed the situation altogether. There were times of depression, it is true, when the twins had seemed to look coldly on us, and we mingled our tears together and talked of ended dreams, blighted lives, and tombstones; but there were moments of exhilaration—Elly and Nelly had smiled upon us—when we rejoiced exceedingly, and pledged each other in brimming cups. On one occasion I remember the liquor was champagne, but, as a rule, our libations were of a more modest vintage. I have some recollection of our treating each other to threepennyworths of gin and cold water, and becoming much excited over that humble stimulant.

Our love for the twins was delightful, but it was attended with some expense. Sparrow and I exhausted all our pocket-money, and even mortgaged heavily our future incomes in our determination to appear attractively arrayed. Those were days when there prevailed a lively faith in bear's grease, and when richly anointed heads of hair were the vogue; when the curling-irons rectified nature's mistakes in the matter of straight locks; when lacquered boots were worn painfully pointed at the toe; when

waistcoats, much rolled in the region of the collar, were gorgeous of pattern, embossed, embroidered, and arabesqued; when it was impossible to assume trousers of too light a hue, or to strap them too tightly beneath the instep; when a gaudy satin stock bound the throat, and formed below it a sort of ornamental chest-plaster, in which it was permitted to stick jewelled pins of vast dimensions linked together by golden chains; when a camellia japonica in the button-hole was as a necessary of life. Happy times, but, as I have suggested, expensive for articled clerks afflicted with the tender passion.

My love, I found, affected my parts of speech. At first I was curiously dumb in the presence of my heart's idol. When language returned to me it had a sort of Elizabethan or blank-verse quality. Ordinary modes of expression seemed inappropriate to the due imparting of my passion. The case demanded resort to the much neglected second personal singular. "Do you love me?" a man might say to a crowd. But "Dost thou love me?" could only be addressed to one, and was an inquiry of very special and individual interest.

A golden opportunity occurred. It was just before one of the dinners in Tavistock-square. I stood in the drawing-room window with Elly Blissett. We were partially screened by the window-curtains. I longed to drop on my knees before her. But there was the chance of being seen by others. Moreover, I had been driven to the conclusion that kneeling to one's mistress must of necessity have gone out of fashion when tightly strapped trousers came in.

"And dost thou love me?" I murmured in bass notes that I must have unconsciously borrowed from some popular tragedian of the period. "Wilt thou, indeed, be mine?"

"You're not a Quaker, are you, Mr. Stack?" said Elly, opening wide wondering blue eyes.

"Nay, hear me swear!" I continued.

"No, that's not like a Quaker!"

Dinner was announced. We were parted. I was somewhat discouraged. But assisted perhaps by the stimulating character of old Blissett's port, I determined upon a further effort after dinner, when, a trifle flushed by good cheer and incipient indigestion, the gentlemen rejoined the ladies in the drawing-room. I spoke again much to the same purport.

"You creature! Why that's exactly what I heard you say to Elly before dinner."

By great mischance I had this time addressed myself to Nelly instead of to Elly. Nelly was pounced upon by lynx-eyed Miss Columba, and was led to the piano to sing a duet with her sister. They were charming efforts the duets of the twins; but things perhaps rather to contemplate than to listen to.

Sparrow had heard my speech to Nelly. He was furious. I certainly think he had been indiscreet in his application to Mr. Blissett's port. We left the house together. He had commenced accusing and vilipending me in the hall, while we were searching for our hats. In the square outside he offered to fight me. "I hate fellows to be mean," he said. But for the appearance of a policeman I think we should have proceeded to violent measures. We parted upon the most angry terms.

When we met in the office next morning he renewed his reproaches. His wrath knew no bounds. He even hurled at me Jacobs's Law Dictionary, a heavy volume in every respect. I meditated flinging in return Chitty's Practice. Fortunately, perhaps, I was sent out suddenly to attend a summons for time to plead at the Judges' Chambers in Rolls Gardens. It may be that manslaughter was thus prevented.

For days we did not speak to each other, but only scowled fiercely when our glances chanced to meet. But soon a common sorrow reunited us. The Miss Blissetts left town, in the custody of their aunt, to sojourn some weeks at Ramsgate.

What were we to do? Our alarm was dire. A ghastly rumour obtained to the effect that our designs had been discovered, that it was because of us and our proceedings that Nelly and Elly had been removed from Tavistock-square. We yielded to despair. It was clear to us that the exquisite twins would fall a prey to the penniless adventurers, possibly of foreign extraction, and possessed of whiskers, who, we agreed, were for ever haunting English watering-places, bent upon abducting the loveliest of our countrywomen. No doubt we were also penniless, or might have been so described by adverse critics, but, then, how affluent we were in sublime sentiments, how deeply tender our emotions in regard to the heavenly twins!

"Fellows ought to act up to their opinions," said Sparrow, gloomily. "Fellows shouldn't go to work in an underhand way. Fellows should always apply direct to girls' parents in these cases."

"You mean that we ought to ask old Blissett for his daughters' hands in marriage?"

"That's what fellows would do who'd any pluck," he growled.

This was a taunt. True, it involved imputation upon himself. But that did not make it the less irritating. Our conversation became unpleasant again. The situation was of an exasperating kind. We interchanged insolences, charging each other with want of courage, goading each other on to deeds of desperation. Once more we were of accord. We would together beard old Blissett in his den—for so we spoke of his private room in Laurence Pountney-lane—and simultaneously lay our case before him.

We struck while the iron was hot. We rushed wildly into the presence of our principal. We spoke while our pulses beat feverishly. Somehow we made ourselves intelligible, and yet it must have been a very confused statement we rendered—a mad medley of words, breathlessly uttered. When one of us broke down the other took up the running, "I love Nelly" and "I love Elly" being the burden of our declarations respectively. A strange scene—a trifle ludicrous and absurd, as I now judge, but we thought gravely enough of it at the time.

Old Mr. Blissett surveyed us with aghast eyes. "Bless my soul!" he cried, a frequent ejaculation of his, and, as he was apt to do in moments of perplexity, he rubbed his bald scalp industriously with the palm of his hand. "One at a time, one at a time. What! are you both mad? Marry my girls! Marry Elly and Nelly!"

Such was the wish of our lives, we cried, the only hope that gave value to our existence. We begged him to bestow upon us Nelly and Elly, and bid us live. If he denied us his twins, why, then, our deaths would be at his door, and let him look to it. Something to that effect was our speech; erratic, perhaps, but tersely eloquent.

"Bless my soul! Give you Elly and Nelly! Why, you don't know one from the other!"

What of that? He didn't either.

"Don't be ridiculous!" he cried. "Besides, they're already engaged to be married."

"Engaged!" we shrieked in unison, noisily as a chorus in an opera by Verdi.

"Yes; and have been for some time. It's their aunt's doing. I have no doubt it's all right. I have had little or no concern in it. I left it altogether to their aunt. I have no doubt the marriages will prove happy ones."

How had I been mistaken in Miss Columba! She was a match-maker after all!

We demanded the names of the monsters in (presumably) human form who had robbed us of our brides; not, however, putting our inquiry quite in that form.

"Oddly enough," said Mr. Blissett, "they're going to marry twin brothers, whom they've known from childhood—wards of mine—Freddy and Eddy Fowler. They're the children of my client, the late Mr. Alderman Fowler, and entitled to a pretty property. They're most worthy young gentlemen, and as like as two peas. I don't know them apart, and I don't know which is which when they're together, and whether it's Freddy that's going to marry Elly, and Eddy Nelly, or whether Freddy takes Nelly and Eddy Elly; I don't believe they know themselves, and I'll be shot if I can tell you. Love-suits, you see, are sometimes quite as puzzling and intricate as chancery-suits, and there's no finding a clear way out of them. But the church will amicably adjust the matter one of these fine days, and there'll be no more to be said. All I know is, the parson who is called in to settle the case will have his work cut out for him, and will find it necessary to keep his eyes wide open, or there's certain to be an accident. But it will be his look-out. It's no affair of mine. So now don't talk any more nonsense, there's good lads, but get on with your work. When are you going to finish fair copying that State of Facts for the Master's Office in Biffin v. Biffin?"

"We were not born under Gemini," I said to Sparrow, moved by that feeling of despair which leads men to aggravate their own dismalness, and further mortify themselves by attempts at jokes upon their wretched condition. He did not heed me; perhaps he did not understand me. I think I have already stated that he was a young man from the West of England.

"Our twins marrying those other twins!" he moaned piteously. "Nelly and Elly, Freddy and Eddy—what frightful confusion! It oughtn't to be allowed. The police ought to interfere. The Court of Chancery ought to supply a remedy. Twins marrying twins! And suppose twins should come of the marriages?"

He nearly fell from his high stool; his voice wailed in agony; his facial expression was imbecile; he was becoming delirious: contemplating an endless vista of twin-born creatures, a fearful vision of bewildered generations, worlds of intricate embarrassment!

Our disappointment was crushing. For some time our anguish was extreme. But we got over it; we got over, indeed, or through, as the days went on, divers other troubles, trials, and states of suffering, including our terms of clerkship and our "exam" at the Law Institution. But the first discovery—mercifully it dawned upon us very gradually—that we were not quite so blighted as we had rather prided ourselves upon being, came to us as a kind of reproof. We smiled seldom and sadly at first, and only when we quite forgot that we ought rather to scowl. We rarely ventured to laugh in the presence of each other. We felt that we owed it to our ruined hopes and betrayed affections to preserve as long as possible much show of grief and severe melancholy of demeanour.

We were present as guests at the marriages of the Sisters Blissett with the Brothers Fowler; our mood was bitter, but it yielded presently, overcome perhaps by the sweetness of the champagne; and our mirth became somehow far less hollow after breakfast than it had been before.

One preciously malicious thought sustained us. We were persuaded that after all, quite at the last moment, a fatal irremediable mistake had occurred—*the wrong twins had been united!*

Whether this were really the case or no we never knew. But it pleased us greatly to think that it might so have happened.

"You'll want nothing more, sir?" asked the waitress, looking into the room; "we're going to bed now."

"Nothing," replied Arthur, "only don't close the house door, as I'm expecting a messenger from Mr. Gay!"

"Right you are, sir!" replied the girl, and went back to tell her friends in the kitchen that the strange guest was "busy with poils of love-letthers," while Arthur commenced the perusal of—

THE IRON CAGE.

It was at the time when all sorts of plots and conspiracies were being hatched at Venice, that a certain private individual, Luca Orioli by name, lived in the town along with his sister Brigida, who kept house for him, and looked after his wants. Brigida was altogether devoted to her brother, and seemed to live but for him, to attend to his comforts, and forward in all things whatever objects he had in view. There are some women like this, who devote themselves to others, and seem to lose sight of themselves altogether. There are not too many of them, but they exist.

Orioli was by calling a missal painter, an illuminator of ancient manuscripts, but the concerns in which at the time I speak of he was entirely absorbed, were neither literary nor artistic. He was altogether occupied with politics, machinations against the existing government, plans for overthrowing it, and setting up in its place a commonwealth, in which equal rights were to be accorded to all, in which the highest noble in Venice was to enjoy no privileges whatever beyond those which were to be accorded to the meanest citizen in the town.

It was a most hazardous plot against the state in which this Orioli was engaged; he, and I know not how many others; some living at Venice, some elsewhere, at Chioggia, at Verona, at Ravenna even, who knows? At all events they were scattered hither and thither, and had to be communicated with, when any intelligence was to be made known to the fraternity, by letter Altogether there was a deal of writing to be got through; not letters only, but reports, statements, projects drawn up on paper to be circulated among the different conspirators. And it was in copying such writings out, or taking down the matter of which they were to consist from her brother's lips, that Brigida made herself more useful than in almost any other way. The girl was an excellent writer, and could copy out a document so that it should be as readable as print. This was a rare accomplishment in those days, and Brigida was kept hard at it, you may be assured, writing from dictation, copying papers of which duplicates were wanted, and so on, all through the day, and part of the night as well.

But for all she was so hard worked, the young lady found time to do a little writing on her own account. The fact is, that the signorina had a lover, one Filippo, ordinarily called Lippo, Rinaldi, living at Padua, and with this young fellow she would correspond whenever she got a chance of sending a letter. She would write to him of everything that was going on, both of her brother's doings and her own, and very pretty letters they were, no doubt, and such as any young gentleman, as much in love as Lippo was, would be very glad to get.

This brother and sister lived, as I have heard the story told, in a little piazzetta at the back of the Riva dei Schiavoni, and not far from the church of St. Giorgio de Greci. It was an out-of-the-way kind of place, for it was very important for Orioli

that he should live as retired as possible, and be as much as possible unobserved by anybody. Here, then, it was that for the most part all those plots and machinations in which Orioli was so deeply implicated were concocted, and here, sometimes, one or more of the conspirators would come to confabulate with him, at times when there seemed to be the least chance of discovery.

One autumn afternoon the brother and sister were engaged in preparing a document to be sent to Verona by special messenger that night. As often happened, Luca was dictating, and his sister was writing. The light was fast fading, and Brigida had established herself close to the window to take advantage of all that was to be had. Orioli was at the window too, but he was standing, leaning his forehead against one of the cross mullions which enclosed the small panes of glass, and gazing out into the little piazza behind the house, which had, it may be mentioned, two entrances, one giving on the piazzetta, and the other on one of the small canals which intersect the town in all directions. There was little light in the room except just close to the window, and the gathering darkness held undisputed possession of the other end of the apartment.

Orioli stood and looked out on the piazzetta, but his eyes took in, as far as he was conscious, nothing of the scene before him. He was absorbed in the letter which he was dictating to his sister, and which related to a final meeting of the brotherhood to which he belonged, which was to take place in a few days, and the time, place, and object of which he was notifying to his Veronese friend. Now and then he would pause in the work of dictation, to say a few words to his sister on some subject connected with the matter in hand.

"Brigida," he said, on one of these occasions, "I think I was followed last night when I parted from Tito Grimani and his brother Bartolommeo, in the enclosure at the back of the palace. The vile spies and secret officers of the senate are everywhere, and I surely think that I detected one of them dogging my footsteps last night."

Brigida looked quickly up from her writing with anxious, frightened eyes.

"I am always fearing it," she said. "Dear Luca, the thought that this plot will one day be discovered, and that you will be taken and imprisoned, is for ever haunting me. How I wish that the old days, before you had become involved in any of these terrible risks, were back again!"

At this moment a slight noise in the room attracted Luca's attention, and turning hastily from the window, and looking into that part of the apartment which was involved in comparative obscurity, he was able to detect the shadowy forms of three men, whom he felt at once were servants of the state.

"We come to arrest you as head conspirator in a plot against the lawful authority of the Venetian senate," said the chief officer, stepping forward out of the obscurity.

The Venetian senate in those days made short work of the trial of political offenders. There were so many of these that the government, in its alarm for its own safety, dealt out severe justice to all such who got within its reach. The evidence against Luca Orioli was irresistibly strong, and it being considered that an opportunity of "making an example" was afforded by his detection, it was determined that a punishment should be resorted to in his instance which was only used very rarely, and principally in cases which were marked by especial atrocity: parricides, persons who were convicted of sacrilege, monks or nuns who had broken their vows, and the like exceptionally gross offenders. The punishment in question consisted in being hung out in an iron cage which was suspended from the top of the great bell-tower or Campanile of Venice, and in which the victim was suffered to perish miserably of starvation and exposure. This was the horrible penalty which was awarded to Luca Orioli.

But what was the saddest part of all—and it was certainly felt to be so by Luca himself—was that his sister, his poor little Brigida, was convicted of complicity with him in this disastrous plot, and was condemned to share his punishment.

It was that skill of hers in penmanship which had ruined her. All sorts of documents of the most compromising character, plans of action to be adopted by the leading conspirators, letters to them from Luca himself on matters connected with the plot, which, though intrusted to careful hands for delivery, had fallen into the clutches of the numerous spies who were always on the look-out for such papers, a great mass of such writings had been seized, and proved beyond doubt to be in the young girl's handwriting; proved, indeed, by comparison with the piece of writing on which she was actually engaged at the moment when the officers of justice made their arrest of Luca.

The crushing weight with which this implication of his little sister fell on Luca, can hardly be described in words. Brigida —Brida as he always called her—had been so many years under his care, her parents having died in her childhood, and was so much his junior, that he had got to regard her almost more as a daughter than as a sister, so much did a feeling of care for her, and a sense that she was a creature to be sheltered from all harm, and protected by him at all cost, pervade all the relations between the two. Nay, it is impossible to say whether the physical difference between them—for Luca was a big powerful man, while Brida was slightly and delicately formed in an uncommon degree—may not have helped to strengthen this feeling on the brother's part, that to keep his little sister out of harm's way was one of the chief occupations of his life.

That this frail creature should be involved through him in so terrible a calamity was to Orioli a thought which was entirely insupportable. Her constitution was delicate, as her frame was, and there could be little doubt that the exposure to the cold and damp, for it was now late autumn, must cause her the extremest suffering. Death, of course, was inevitable for both, as they were to hang there in the iron cage till famine did its work, but that she should suffer as well as die——! It was too terrible, and the earnest and passionate appeal which Luca made to the judges on his sister's behalf—he had made no such appeal for himself—might have touched, one would have thought, even harder hearts than those to which he had to address himself.

"It is my doing, and mine only," he cried, at last. "She did what I told her—miserable that I am. On me let the penalty fall—a double penalty if you choose. Let me be tortured, burnt at a slow fire, anything, only spare her, my little Brigida, a creature incapable of harming any one, and whose love for her brother has been her only fault."

But he spoke to men of stone when he addressed that pitiless assembly in the dimly-lighted council chamber of the Doge's Palace. The fiat had gone forth, and must be obeyed. She was sentenced, and must suffer.

A damp cold night at the end of October. An iron cage hung out upon a crane-like arm projecting from the top of the great belfry tower of Venice, and in it were the two malefactors who had incurred the wrath of the Venetian senate. The cage and its occupants had been hung out a little before sunset, and while the light lasted the people in the piazza below had stood about the base of the pillar gazing up at the uncommon sight.

There was not much to see. Little could be made out at that height of the two figures in the cage; the structure itself, and its occupants, looking not much bigger than a bird-cage with a couple of linnets inside. Still the people knew that human creatures were up there, and they gazed so long as the light lasted, and not till it had quite faded did the last of them go away. The cage would be there the next day, however, "that was one comfort," and after that who could tell how long. There would be a couple of corpses in it one day instead of these living creatures. The spectacle would be more interesting, if possible, then even than now.

Hand in hand, the brother and sister sat crouching on the floor of the cage, quiet, resigned, and waiting for the end. They spoke but seldom, a word or two now and then, an attempt to encourage each other; then there would come a long pause, while they took half unconscious note of the scene around, above, below. Mechanically their eyes dwelt on the near details of the huge column to which their prison was suspended, the ornamentation which looked so smooth and elaborate from below, but here close by seemed quite rough and unfinished. The stars burnt above them, the twinkling lights came out in the city below, the dark lagoon stretched out as far as they could see, the tower and belfries of the town showed dimly above the other buildings, but none came near in height to the great Campanile from which they hung, and which, when the bells rang out, seemed positively to sway with the vibration of the deafening sound.

They were utterly wearied and exhausted. It was cold, and the damp rose from the canal and the lagoon, and seemed to chill them to the bone. Poor little Brigida shivered involuntarily from time to time. The absence of all hope—all possibility of deliverance—seemed to depress her vital power, and produced a degree of chill which the actual condition of the temperature did not account for.

"My poor Brida," said Luca, tenderly, looking kindly on her in the dim light, "they might have spared you. What a conspirator," he added, smiling bitterly, "what a dangerous subject. Oh!" he cried, his tone changing suddenly, "that

something could be done to deliver you from this dreadful fate!"

"Do you wish me away, then, Luca?" She paused a moment, and her thoughts went back to happier times. "Luca," she went on, "how happy we used to be before you were mixed up with these dreadful plots and conspiracies, when you used to work all day at your beautiful missals, and I sat by you making the patterns which you had designed on my embroidery; and Lippo, who used to be with us so often. Poor Lippo! I wonder what he is doing, and if he got the letter which I sent to him after you were arrested——"

She stopped abruptly as her brother started up from the crouching position in which he had lain so long, causing the cage to swing violently to and fro by the sudden movement.

"What was that?" he cried. "Something rushed by me in the air; was it a bird? It came quite near my head."

"Again," he cried, after a short interval. "Ah! it is not a bird. It is—it is an arrow!"

"An arrow?" echoed Brigida; "what can that mean?" The moon had come out brightly just at this time from behind a cloud, and they both gazed down on the piazza. The sky was covered again presently, and everything was indistinct, but Brigida thought she had made out something like the figure of a man in the great square, near the base of the column. "What can it mean?" said Brigida again.

"It means," replied her brother, "that we are hung up here as a mark to be shot at. But in the dark, why in the dark?"

Brigida shuddered involuntarily and drew nearer to her brother. "I hope they will kill me first," she said.

The words were hardly out of her mouth when a third arrow came whizzing through the air. This time it struck Luca full on the shoulder.

"They aim well by this dim light," he said. "Strange," he added, after a pause, "the arrow hit me full, and yet it has not pierced my skin, nor, I think, made any wound. But what is this?" he added a moment afterwards. A line had fallen across his arm, and as he drew one end of it to him he found that it was attached to the arrow which had struck him. "The arrow is blunted at the end, and there is a silken line attached to it."

Quick in her woman's wit, quicker still in her love instinct, Brigida saw in an instant what had happened. "It is from Lippo," she cried; "you know what a good marksman he is. I knew he would help us."

"There is something fastened to the line," said Luca, pulling it swiftly into the cage. "It is heavy," he continued, "and gets heavier as I draw it nearer. It is a rope!"

An exclamation of relief burst from brother and sister at once. It was followed, as often happens, by a reaction.

"But the cage," cried Brigida. "How can we get out?"

"Easily," was the reply. "They have thought that the height from the ground was safeguard enough against any attempt to escape, and have not considered it necessary to place the bars very near together. A little squeezing, dear, and we shall get that small body of yours through between these two bars, which by some accident have got more forced apart than the others."

Brigida shuddered involuntarily, but her brother allowed her no time for reflection. Rapidly, but skilfully, he fastened one end of the rope to the cage, and then tenderly, but very securely, wound the other end about his sister's body.

"How terrible it looks," said the girl, gazing down into the darkness below. "Luca," she cried as if a sudden thought had struck her, "you will let me down, but who will let you down?"

"I shall descend the rope hand over hand, as I have done scores of times for pastime at the gymnasium. It is nothing to me."

"Oh, Luca, are you sure? And the bars. If I can get through them, which seems hardly possible, are you sure you can, dear?"

"I am as slippery as an eel," he answered with a forced laugh, and shall get through as easily as possible. "Come, dear," he added, hurriedly, "there is not a moment to lose. The rope is safely round you, it cannot slip. Now, dear, courage—a little pain in squeezing through, and you are safe."

He gave her, in his merciful consideration, no time to think, and very firmly, but with such care as a surgeon uses when subjecting his patient to inevitable pain, he forced her through the opening between the bars, which at the particular part might have been perhaps from seven to seven and a half inches asunder.

"Oh Luca, Luca," cried the girl, "take me back, you will never, never be able to follow me. You are so much bigger. Take me back, and let me stay with you to the end."

She struggled and clung to the cage, but Luca would not listen to her. He detached her hands from the bars, only too easily, for she was half fainting, then he leaned over and kissed her head, and then with rapid but cautious action paid out the rope through the bars.

When Brigida reached the termination of her hazardous journey she was insensible, and it was in that state that Lippo received her into his arms. By the time she was released from the rope which was bound about her body, the poor girl had regained possession of her senses. Lippo's first care, after almost suffocating his recovered treasure with caresses, was to provide for Brigida's immediate escape. He had a boat ready in the canal close by, manned by a couple of boatmen whom he could implicitly trust, and he was for hurrying her away at once, lest any of the officers of the night-watch, in making their rounds, should enter the piazza. But Lippo's entreaties, usually so powerful with Brigida, were in this case of no avail. Till Luca was free of the cage, and stood there beside her, nothing would induce her to consult her own safety. She would fly with him or not at all, and the utmost that Lippo's persuasion could effect was to induce her to hide herself, within a recess in the great building which flanked the south side of the square, and came near to the Campanile's base.

The girl was, in truth, in an agony of apprehension lest that escape from the cage, which, even in her case, had been effected with so much difficulty, should for her brother be a thing altogether impracticable. With every moment that passed this terrible apprehension gained increase of strength. As to what Luca himself was about, neither she nor Lippo could do more than form the vaguest conjectures. At that height, and in the darkness, they could see nothing but the general outline of the cage against the sky. They could make out, too, that the rope was violently agitated and shaken, evidently owing to the movement imparted to the cage by the efforts of its occupant to force himself through the bars. But time passed, and there was still no indication of that descending figure for which they were looking with such absorbing eagerness, and Brigida could no longer resist a sickening conviction that her worst fears were realised.

"Oh," she cried, "why did I leave him? It was selfish, it was cruel. I knew he could not get through. Those large, strong shoulders of his"—and here, so strangely are we constituted, came out a touch of sisterly pride—"would never pass through that small opening. Lippo," she cried, almost angrily, "can you do nothing? Why did you shoot that arrow? Why did you take me away from him? Poor, noble brother, he only cared about me. Lippo," she cried again, petulantly, "there must be something more possible. Quick, the night is passing away, and when daylight comes it will be too late."

Lippo cast one look up towards the cage, and mechanically stretched out his hand to the silken cord which hung down still from the cage by the side of the rope. As he touched it he seemed to conceive a new idea.

"There is hope yet," he said. "Only stay here, keep within the shadow of the wall, and wait, with what patience you can, till I return."

He did not stop for her answer, but dashed off across the piazza at his utmost speed.

What a time was that which followed! Brigida was alone, alone at the foot of the column, at the top of which her well-loved brother was still encaged. She could not communicate with him. She had no one at all to speak to or take counsel with. It was one of those dreadful cases in which the severest part of the trial is the necessity of total inaction. It was almost unbearable. She longed to speak. She longed to call aloud to her brother; to entreat him not to despair. She felt that he had abandoned all thoughts of escape. The rope hung quietly now, showing that no movement was taking place in the cage. Oh that she could know what this quietness meant! Was he waiting, patient, resigned, for the end? Did he think she had abandoned him, and that she had consulted her own safety in flight? No, he could not believe *that*. Or had some dreadful thing happened? Had he got fixed between the bars?—was he strangled, suffocated?

The suspense was horrible, but it must be borne. Brigida was possessed of the priceless gift of good sense. She was wise as well as loving. She must be quiet, she must keep herself concealed, as she had been told to do. Everything—her brother's fate especially—depended on her not being found. She must keep within the shadow of that piece of masonry behind which Lippo had hidden her, and wait.

Once she stole out to the foot of the Campanile. The rope by which she had descended hung out away from the pillar, and if any one came by the place would attract attention. She got hold of it,

and twisted and entwined it among some of the projecting decorations about the base of the column, so that it should be less conspicuous. Then she crept back and hid herself once again.

Even at that hour—it was between two and three in the morning—St. Mark's Place was not entirely deserted. A couple of belated Venetians crossed the square just after she had got back to her hiding-place. They came quite near to where she was concealed, and stood looking up at the column, evidently occupied with the topic of the moment, which, indeed, all Venice was talking about. "It is the girl I pity most," she heard one of the men say, just as they passed out of hearing. She was, indeed, at this moment, perhaps, most to be pitied. After the two men came a party of the watch on their rounds. They came near to the foot of the Campanile, and Brigida's heart almost stood still with terror.

"They seem quiet enough up there," said one of the men.

"Quiet? Yes; I should think so," rejoined another. "I shouldn't wonder if one of them, at any rate, was quiet in death. The girl looked more than half dead before she was put up there."

"I wonder they haven't placed a sentry here by the Campanile," said one of the men, who had not spoken before.

"Why, what would be the use of a sentry?" retorted the first speaker. "How do you think they could get out of the cage? And do you suppose that, even if they did, they could make a hop, skip, and a jump of it from the top of the Campanile, which is more than three hundred feet high, to the bottom? A sentry, indeed!"

The sergeant in command of the party interposed at this juncture with the word to march, and the little band passed on. They left poor Brigida with new matter for alarm. What if a sentry should yet be placed there? What if the watch should come round again? What if her brother should be able to get out, and they should appear as he was in the act of descending?

This inaction was terrible. Brigida felt as if she must do something. She would go to the foot of the pillar and call aloud to her brother. She would go and meet Lippo. No; she would do none of these things. She would control herself with all her might, and keep close there in her dark corner till she could do something that would be really useful. She would—— Ah, there was Lippo. Now something would be done, at any rate.

"Where have you been? What have you done?" she cried, as soon as he was within hearing of her.

"I have been home to fetch this," he answered, holding up a file. "Luca must file through one of the bars at the top. Then he will be able to bend it aside, and pass through."

"Oh, but is there time?"

"The day will not begin to break for an hour."

Even while he was speaking Lippo was engaged in fastening the little instrument on which so much depended to the silken cord, which still hung down by the side of the column. This done, he gave the line one or two sharp pulls to attract the attention of the occupant of the cage.

"Thank God he is alive at least," murmured Brigida, as the line with the file attached to it was swiftly drawn up from above.

And now, indeed, there followed a time when the suspense endured by those who waited below amounted to something little short of agony. It was vain for them to strain their eyes into the darkness; they could make out nothing of what was going on above. It was vain to listen for the sound of the file; it was a windy night, and so slight a noise could not be heard at that distance. Then there was the ever-present fear lest some one should, even at that unlikely hour, appear on the piazza. The watch, again on their rounds, passed by once more with lights and their arms glittering, but this time they did not come so close to the column as they did before. Presently afterwards a drunken fellow came by and insisted on talking to Lippo in a disastrously friendly strain. He stayed so long, and was so garrulous on the subject of the cage and its occupants, that Lippo could only get him to leave the place by going with him, returning alone at his utmost speed as soon as he had lured the talkative sot safely out of the square.

Meanwhile the night, or rather the morning, was wearing on. It was the time of year when the darkness is long in giving place to daylight, and there was as yet no hint even of approaching dawn. Only the striking of the hours from the neighbouring clocks told our two watchers of the near approach of dawn, and made them tremble. They almost counted the minutes now, so precious had they become. If once the city began to wake up, and the people to stir abroad, the escape of Luca from his prison would be impossible. There was no indication of any such thing as yet, but the time was, nevertheless, near at hand when the world would wake up

for the day, and the life of Venice begin afresh.

While Lippo and Brigida were waiting at the column's foot, turning these things over and over in their thoughts, they were suddenly startled by the sound of some object falling, with a metallic clinking sound, on the pavement of the square. Everything that befel now was of the most prodigious moment, and Lippo rushed to the spot, and falling on his knees on the ground made eager search for the object, whatever it might be, whose fall had produced the sound. An exclamation of dismay brought Brigida to his side. He was holding in his hand the file which so short a time before they had seen drawn up to the top of the column.

"What is it that has happened?" faltered Brigida. Her faculties were in some sort benumbed by long tension, and she could not understand, only felt that something was wrong.

"He has dropped it while at work," replied Lippo. "We must send it up to him again; but how? The silken cord is drawn up—ah, there is the rope!"

As Lippo spoke, he looked up and saw what seemed to take the very power of speaking away from him. He stretched out his hand, and seizing Brigida by the wrist, pointed upward towards the top of the column.

A dim faint glimmer of approaching dawn was just begininng to make itself felt rather than seen, in the eastern quarter of the sky. It was not dawn yet, only the first hint of the coming morning twilight, enough to give some slight additional distinctness to any object that stood out against the sky, and no more. The true daybreak, which was presently to bathe the whole of the heavens in loveliest pellucid light, was near at hand, but it was not there yet.

When Brigida looked up in the direction indicated by her lover, she could at first see nothing but the mighty pile of masonry at whose foot she was standing, black and enormous against the sky; but, as she continued to gaze, she became presently conscious that high up in the air, suspended between earth and heaven, there hung some object which moved, and swung, and swayed this way and that as it descended, for it *was* descending, towards the still distant earth.

The file had done its work.

Mechanically she fell upon her knees, it was only in that attitude that she could await the end, and, with clasped hands, gazed upwards at that slowly descending form, which now with every inch of nearer approach became more distinctly and more surely recognisable.

My little story has reached its end. As soon as Luca reached the ground, after safely accomplishing his perilous descent, the three made off, with such speed as belongs to those who fly for life, to the boat which was awaiting them, and, long before their flight had been suspected, or the fact proclaimed that the iron cage was empty, its late occupants were far away from terrible Venice, and safe from their pursuers. And in due time the old days of the missal painting and embroidering were revived, only the scene was in a tranquil Dutch town, and Lippo, now the husband of happy little Brigida, was a permanent part of the establishment.

THE next manuscript had a pencil indorsement by Cameron, "Told to me by Dr. Barr," and was called—

FACE TO FACE.

I.

MY first meeting with Mr. Owen Curtis, barrister-at-law, happened a good many years ago. He was junior counsel for the plaintiff in an action for damages brought against a railway company. There had been a collision on the line, and his client, a passenger, had sustained severe injuries. I was one of the medical witnesses.

There had been a medical consultation in order that the counsel engaged might be thoroughly instructed as to the technical and scientific questions arising from the evidence. It devolved upon Curtis to master these details of the case so that he might duly prompt his leader as the trial proceeded. I had, therefore, several interviews with the junior counsel, and I remember being much struck with his quickness of perception, and the soundness of his judgment in deciding upon the points to be specially urged upon the jury. He had little scientific knowledge to begin with, but his trained intelligence, his retentive memory, and logical method, stood him in good stead. He acquitted himself admirably. It was mainly owing to his exertions that the jury were so liberal in their award of compensation to his client. His leader—who only came into court to deliver his speeches—warmly thanked him, and the judge particularly complimented him. I make mention of these facts with a view to the character and qualities of the man being the better comprehended.

The case over, it so chanced that I met Curtis again and again. There was at no time the intimacy of friendship subsisting between us, but rather a good sort of understanding, based, I suppose, upon mutual esteem and professional consideration. If I ever needed legal help I felt sure of obtaining it at his hands; so, if he wanted medical advice, I took it for granted he would come to me.

Still, even in this informal way I could hardly count him as a patient, for he so rarely ailed anything. He was a tall, large-framed, middle-aged man, of active habits, and with every appearance of great physical strength. His complexion was swarthy, his features were massive but regular, his eyes large and dark, without being remarkably brilliant. His forehead was broad, and looked lower than it really was, from his wearing his thick brown-black hair falling forward upon it in heavy masses. He was usually rather careless about his dress, but altogether his aspect was decidedly that of a gentleman.

He called upon me rather late one night, begging me to pardon his so doing on the ground that he greatly desired to consult me, and to occupy more of my time, perhaps, than I could conveniently devote to him earlier in the day. I was alone, and I hastened to assure him that my services were quite at his disposal. He looked anxious and jaded, I noted, and his manner was certainly agitated. His hand was tremulous and feverishly hot. His voice was weak and husky, and he seemed to have unusual difficulty in expressing himself. I confess, it occurred to me that he had been dining too freely. Presently, however, I was able to dismiss this notion. He grew more composed, and succeeded in controlling the nervous excitement which had at first appeared to affect him. I judged him to be suffering from overfatigue and excessive application to his professional duties. He admitted that his health was but indifferent, that his appetite now often failed him, and that, of late, his sleep had been much disturbed. My advice was of the kind usual under the circumstances. I recommended rest, change of air and scene, with some recourse to tonic treatment. He nodded his head, and implied that he had been fully prepared to receive advice of that nature.

"But there's more in it than you think," he said, after a pause, during which his agitation returned to him. "I have not told you all. It's not ordinary assistance that I ask of you. I came to you because I felt sure that you would, in the first place, listen to me calmly and patiently, and next, having heard me, would not be in a hurry, as many men would be, to set me down as stark mad. Please understand the expression literally—*stark mad.*"

"Certainly not," I said, with a start, wondering at his words. He was much moved, and had the air of one constraining himself to make a painful confession. But in look and manner he manifested no trace of mental disorder.

"Yet," he resumed, "to pronounce me of unsound mind would only be a reasonable conclusion. If my case were another's I should certainly not hesitate so to decide. Indeed, I have the greatest difficulty, as it is, in divesting myself of the conviction that I am, to speak plainly, going mad. More, that on one subject, on one only, so far as I can at present determine, I am already mad.

I ventured to suggest that morbid imaginings of the kind he mentioned were frequently due to the depression of spirits which accompanies derangement of the physical system, exhaustion of strength, and undue concentration of the mental faculties; that with the renovation of his general health, I had no doubt, these particular fancies of his, however distressing and acute they might now be, would speedily depart.

"But you will not decline to listen to me?" he asked.

I said I thought it would be more prudent to leave the matter at rest, for the present at any rate, and I asked him to let me see him again after he had followed my prescriptions and permitted himself an interval of retirement and repose. We could then, I added, if the necessity for so doing still existed, go fully into the subject he had referred to. This proposal did not content him, however.

"There is no time to lose," he said, excitedly. "Already I may have delayed too long. It is hard to speak on this matter, even to you; but it is harder still to keep silence. The burden of doubt and fear I have been bearing is becoming quite insupportable to me. Think what my position is. I feel that at any moment I may be charged with being insane, and I am conscious that I have no sufficient answer to the charge. Still I feel myself competent and sane enough to discuss the subject, to reason upon it, as though the case were not my own, but another man's. How long shall I be able to do so? Who can

say? In justice to myself I ought to speak now."

"But surely," I said, "you are attaching exaggerated importance to a passing fancy, generated by ill health, which will soon, of itself, wholly cease to trouble you."

"Judging, then, by what you know and can now see of me, putting aside what I have just now said, you would pronounce me sane?"

"Unquestionably," I answered.

"I should think so too, but for one circumstance. My health, as I have told you, is not so good as formerly, still I do not find my capacity for work affected to any appreciable extent. I have been much occupied of late, but not excessively so. I can detect no decline of my professional reputation. My clients still trust me, the attorneys still bring me work. Ask any man at the bar and he will tell you that I am held in general esteem as a 'rising junior.' I believe even now the Chancellor would give me 'silk' if I cared to move towards taking it. You yourself would probably not hesitate to follow my legal opinion if you were in any difficulty. So far then I am not less sane than my fellows. But now comes my—what am I to call it? Let me employ a mild term, and say delusion. You will let me speak of it?"

I could not refuse.

"Granting me sane then, otherwise, in one respect I am strangely, terribly at fault. I'll be as brief as I may. When I look in the glass what ought I to see?"

"Your own image, of course."

"The reflection of a dark man, full-faced, with strongly marked features and nearly black hair?"

"Exactly."

His description of himself was sufficiently accurate.

"Well, I see nothing of the kind."

"What then do you see?"

He hesitated a little; then he said with some effort:

"When I look in the glass, it seems to me that quite another face than mine looks out of the glass at me."

"And this face——"

"I can scarcely describe it. But it's not *my* face; it is different in form, colour, expression, in every respect."

"But this is surely an optical delusion."

"It is rather, I think, a fatal hallucination, or evidence of diseased brain."

"You have looked in a defective plate. Your mind is ill at ease. Your nerves have been unstrung. You have surrendered yourself to some complete misconception."

"Such would be no doubt a satisfactory explanation of a delusion of the kind in an ordinary case. But I may say that I am not weakly constituted in mind or body. I am wholly without the imaginative faculty. I am hardened against fanciful influences. I am by nature, by education, and by professional habit, strictly a practical, reasoning, and common-sense creature. I am incapable of giving sudden and rash credence to an idea of this kind, of accepting it without the most resolute resistance, the fullest examination. It is no affair of a defective looking-glass peered into by a frightened, imaginative, credulous man. I have tried the thing again and again. I have tested it in every way I could think of. I have studied and investigated it as I would a case formally submitted to me for a legal opinion. I have cross-examined it, if I may so express myself, as I would a suspicious witness. Candidly, then, am I a man likely to be mistaken as to my experiences in this matter?"

I felt bound to admit that I believed him to be as little likely as myself to be readily deceived in such a case.

"I have tried the thing not in one possibly defective glass as you have suggested, but in five hundred glasses."

"With the same result?"

"Always with the same result."

There was a glass over the mantelpiece in my room. I stood up before it.

"Look here," I said, "and tell me what you see." He came to my side. "You see *my* reflection to begin with? Is there anything wrong with that?"

"Nothing whatever."

"Now turn to your own. What do you see?"

"The face I have spoken of. Not mine, nothing like mine, but another man's; a face I have seen only in the glass when I have looked to find my own."

"It is like no face you have ever seen before?"

"It is like no face I have ever seen before even in my dreams. I am not mistaken in this matter. I am not the victim of an optical delusion. I know what my own face is like. This is not the case of an ugly old woman studying her glass, and expecting to find herself young and beautiful. I am indifferent as to my general appearance. It would not pain me to hear myself pronounced hideous and misshapen. Still I know this is not my face. What *that* is like I have satisfied myself. I made it my business to satisfy myself." He produced a packet of photographs. "Here are

various portraits of myself, more or less successful. I can recognise them all as portraits of myself. No one bears the slightest resemblance to the face I now see in the glass exactly opposite me."

"And you cannot describe it?"

"Rather say that I can give no description of it that at all satisfies me in regard to accuracy and completeness. But I am, as you know, or perhaps as you do not know, something of an artist. I can boast a certain facility in sketching. Well, I have frequently endeavoured to sketch this face that looks out at me from my looking-glass. I have not wholly succeeded. Something of expression and air escapes my art, defies my pencil. Still what I have drawn may help you to conceive the kind of face I see, and will convince you that it is nothing like my own or any distortion or mistaken view of it. I have made several sketches, all failing, however, in some respects. Whether it proves more my sanity or my insanity I cannot decide, but I may state that I have made these drawings, calmly and deliberately, with little more excitement than I should feel in taking a sketchy portrait of some person quite indifferent to me—a bystander in court, let me say."

It struck me as, in any case, decidedly creditable to the strength of his nervous system that he should have been able composedly to make a drawing of the spectre, if it was so to be called, he believed to be haunting him.

"This face you speak of occasions you no alarm, then?" I inquired.

"I am not emotional, and I am not easily alarmed. In itself, the face I see where I should of right see my own, does not much disturb me, except inasmuch as it is to be accounted a symptom of diseased brain, and as it compels me to suspect my state of mind. At first I was merely affected by a sense of strangeness and uneasiness. I was hopeful that the delusion—for so, I suppose, I must call it, though it is to me a matter of most indisputable fact—would sooner or later fade and depart, that I should overcome and banish it by sheer strength of intellect and force of volition. This has not happened. I have grown, therefore, vexed, discomfited, tormented beyond measure. You will say that I might escape this delusion—this *thing*—by avoiding looking-glasses. No doubt. A looking-glass is a small matter to me, and I could live well enough without one. But then you must understand the constant, unremitting temptation to test my mental condition—to ascertain whether I am or not still the victim of this extraordinary visitation. I am for ever asking myself, am I mad or not? Is the spectre still there? Shall I see myself or another if I turn to the glass? My strength is yielding. I feel myself gradually borne down. So I come to tell you of my state, and to ask if you can help me, feeling satisfied that knowing me as you do, you would not hurriedly, or without due listening to me, form an opinion in the matter."

His manner was perfectly rational, and, allowing for the very natural distress he experienced in speaking of a condition of things that, as he well knew, impeached his own sanity, he could not have stated a case in court with more calmness and lucidity.

I turned to examine his drawings. They were slight, free-handed sketches in pen and ink, exhibiting considerable artistic skill, of a very curious-looking head. Certainly there was scarcely a shadow of resemblance in this portrait to Curtis's own face, except, perhaps, in regard to the regularity of the features. The expression was one of acute suffering. It seemed to me the portrait of a man many years older than Curtis, gaunt, emaciated, broken down by prolonged care and anguish. The skin appeared so tightly drawn over the bones of the face, that it wore quite a skull-like look. The eyes were deeply sunken, yet gleamed like burning coals from out the dark shadow of the overhanging brows. The hair was thin, long, and disordered, blanched apparently by time and sorrow. It was, indeed, a dreadful face, with something unhuman, unearthly, and appalling in the ghastliness and ghostliness of its air and presence. Its looks haunted me long after I had put away from me the drawings. The more I considered them the more a sense of awe and repulsion grew upon me. And this was the face Curtis was for ever seeing in the place of his own in the looking-glass! No wonder, strong man though he was, he had become cowed at last, had felt his brain yielding, had surrendered himself to something like terror.

"Well?" he asked.

For some moments I remained silent. What could I say?

"What do you think of my case?"

The word "monomania" was on my lips, but I refrained from uttering it. Was he, in truth, mad, or was he, as he had himself suggested, the victim of some extraordinary and supernatural visitation?

I begged that he would allow me time to consider the matter fully, and to form a deliberate opinion. I urged him, meanwhile, to give himself repose and change, at any rate.

A fortnight afterwards I received a brief note from him. He did not refer to the subject of our conversation, but bade me adieu for some months. He had undertaken, it appeared, a commission to examine witnesses in a distant colony. He looked forward to the voyage greatly benefiting his health. His letter was in all respects that of a sane man. For years I had no tidings of him whatever.

II.

"I HAVE fewer patients than usual just now," said my friend Doctor Gurwood one day. I was visiting his establishment at Twickenham. "I suppose I ought to congratulate myself on the success of my curative system. Yet now and then I come across a case that baffles me altogether. I will show you a patient who quite defies my skill. He has been some time in my charge, but his state is, I fear, wholly irremediable. I should be glad to have your opinion."

Doctor Gurwood, I should state, was an authority on brain disease, and famous for his successful treatment of the insane.

"The present form of the patient's malady is settled melancholia, with its most difficult and distressing incidents; and these are aggravated by great physical prostration. He is quite harmless. Of acute dementia I have for some time been unable to discover any trace remaining. But his constitution is terribly shattered, and any attempts to rouse the mental faculties have been altogether vain. I have removed as far as possible all restraint and surveillance. I have endeavoured, according to my usual practice in such cases, to bring the patient within the operation of the most kindly, domestic, social, and humanising influences. But the results have, I confess, disappointed me. I fear I can do little more now than leave Nature to work out her own ends. You shall judge for yourself."

He led the way to a small, but well-lit and neatly furnished apartment on an upper floor of the house. In an arm-chair by the window there reclined the motionless, frail, shrunken figure of a man, his head bowed so that the chin rested upon his chest, and his thin wasted hands outstretched, flaccid and helpless, in front of him. I judged him to be sixty years of age. His complexion was of a waxen white: his features looked sharp and rigid from attenuation; he seemed to me more like a carving in ivory than a creature of flesh and blood. His lips were hueless; his hair, rough and unkempt, harsh and dry in quality, was of an ashen grey. Indeed, the way in which all colour, save of a neutral sort, appeared to have faded from the man as from a dead flower, was one of his most marked characteristics.

"A very hopeless case, I fear," said the physician, after a few moments. He half drew down one of the window-blinds, by way, as it seemed to me, of doing something to excite the attention of the patient. It was in vain, however. The figure remained still as a corpse. He addressed some few words to it, a common-place inquiry. It made no answer.

"This is not one of our good days by any means," said Doctor Gurwood. Gently he touched the man on the shoulder. The figure started a little, raised its head until slowly its eyes came level with the doctor's face. Such strange staring eyes; fierce, and yet blank-looking, from their lack of all human intelligence. There was no recognition in them; there scarcely seemed indeed to be speculation. They were as the wide-open yet purblind eyes of some wild creature dazed by the daylight.

But I then knew, what before had occurred to me involuntarily only as a strange and distressing suspicion. I recognised—I found myself compelled to recognise—the face before me. It was the face Curtis had sketched, the face that haunted him, that, as he had avowed, looked out at him from his looking-glass!

"He never speaks. He will rarely take food except upon compulsion. Yet this obstinacy no longer arises from suicidal mania. All inclination of that kind has long since abated, and I am under no apprehension of its return, so far as its more violent symptoms are concerned, at any rate. He gives little trouble now. But his state does not yield in any appreciable degree to my treatment."

"And you think nothing more can be done for him?"

"I know of nothing. Have you any suggestion to offer? But, indeed, it's clear to me that the man is rapidly sinking."

"You know his story?"

"I have full particulars in my books. I always make it a condition that I am thoroughly informed of a patient's antecedents, and, so far as they can be ascertained, the exciting causes of his malady."

We were now in Doctor Gurwood's private room. He referred to one of the volumes ranged in front of his desk.

"I see he has been now a long time

under my charge, a much longer time than I had thought. His age is forty-six; a barrister by profession; his name Owen Curtis."

I started. The doctor continued turning over the leaves of his book as he spoke.

"I remember all the facts of the case now. He was at one time in very good practice—was highly thought of at the bar. He left England on a commission to examine witnesses at Port Phillip in a case of some importance. His journey was fruitless, however; the case never came into court, but was suddenly compromised. Curtis had been for some time in ailing health. He remained in Australia, and, after an interval, practised at the colonial bar. He had great success, and his prospects were excellent. He was a general favourite; but then occurred an unfortunate accident which I see I have registered here as 'exciting cause of mental alienation.' I can't but think there must have been predisposing conditions, however. It seems he was retained to defend a prisoner on a capital charge. It was a case of murder, or suspected murder, which had occasioned very general excitement in the colony. Curtis was chargeable at most with an error of judgment, an excess of confidence in his own opinion; but the consequences were of a fatal kind. It seems he relied upon a point of law and his skill as an advocate, and withheld from the jury certain important evidence—prevented, indeed, a most material witness from entering the box. The general opinion was that this witness could have fully established the innocence of the accused, for the best of reasons, some say, that the witness was the real criminal, and the accused wholly innocent. But the case for the prosecution involved the prisoner in a complicated web of circumstantial evidence which the advocate vainly endeavoured to break through. He missed the real weak place in it, and misdirected his attack. The defence failed miserably; the prisoner died on the scaffold. Popular sympathies went with him—he was proclaimed a murdered man. Curtis was denounced on all hands. It was ruin to him, or something very like ruin. His health broke down; symptoms of aberration ensued. He was sent home by an early ship to his relations in England. On the passage he went, simply, raving mad, and it was found necessary to confine him in irons. In that state he came to me. He has ever since remained an inmate of my establishment. I don't know that I need enter further into the case; but I have here full particulars if you feel interested in them. 'Course of treatment pursued,' set out at great length; I like to record every detail of the case, with the dates, medicines administered, &c. 'Acute dementia,' 'acetate of morphia with hot baths,' and so on; 'suicidal monomania;' a long story, you see, until we come to 'settled melancholia,' 'no lucid intervals,' 'general health very bad,' 'extreme prostration of bodily strength.' A very curious case altogether, and, in its way one of the most distressing that ever came under my attention."

He closed the book. I was silent for some minutes, reflecting upon what I had heard. I then stated to Dr. Gurwood the facts of my former acquaintance with Curtis and his consultation with me in regard to his mental condition. I told the story of the delusion, if it was to be so called, under which he laboured.

"That entirely confirms my view that a predisposition to aberration had long existed," said Doctor Gurwood.

"Can you account in any way for the curious circumstance that the face he saw in the glass, or thought he saw, at any rate that he made a drawing of, long years ago, is really an accurate resemblance of the man himself in his present deplorable state?"

He did not answer very directly.

"You are sure that you are not yourself importing fancy into the case? That your own recollection of Curtis's story and of the drawings he exhibited to you, is perfectly sound and unquestionable? Imagination, you know, is very apt to play tricks with memory, to add colour to its facts, to distort their form and substance. The man was, of course, the victim of a delusion. The insanity he now suffers under, had already, though perhaps imperceptibly, commenced. His mind was yielding, it was presently to give away altogether."

I ventured to suggest that his observations did not fairly meet the case.

"I can only deal confidently with my own facts," he said. "I can't accept your facts as though they were within my own experience. I must, if I may say so without offence, doubt your statement of the case. Impressed with Curtis's delusion, have you not built upon it another delusion?"

I could only say that I was not a likely man, I thought, to be the subject of delusions.

"Certainly not," he said. "But it's your case, and, therefore, I don't feel bound to

find an explanation of it. You see, as scientific, as sensible men, we can't admit, we can't discuss for a moment, the conclusion to which your story points, the theory of prophetic vision which Highlanders call or used to call—for I don't suppose they still cling to such notions—*second sight*. There's an explanation for you if you like to accept it."

"But is there no other?" I asked.

"Well," he said, after a pause, "taking your statement of the case, why not regard it as one of mental hallucination attended by remarkable complications of coincidence?"

The definition did not satisfy me, and I could see that he was not himself content with it. But I had not—I have not now—any other to offer.

THE LAMP'S TIDINGS.

A LIGHT step on the gravel outside at this juncture aroused Arthur Stacey's attention, and the next moment the door opened, and one of the Slaves stood before him.

"Sorry to disturb you, Mr. Stacey, at so late an hour," he said, "but Heart's Content has just asked us whether you were at Valentia; and the superintendent thinks you had better come round, as there may probably be a message for you soon."

Arthur Stacey rose, and with a beating heart, accompanied the Slave, who left him in the outer office, while he entered the inner temple alone. The Slave in waiting on the Lamp was murmuring of Copperheads and shoddy, of Erie Railroad and Fernando Wood, and Mr. Gay stood by his side.

He turned round as Arthur entered and said, "Nothing for you yet, Mr. Stacey: this is an apparently interminable press message about matters which are not cared for in America, and not understood in England. Ah! at last there is an end to it," he exclaimed, as the spot of light became stationary in the centre of the screen.

"I should think," said Arthur Stacey, struggling hard to repress his nervous excitement, which was now very great, "I should think that Cameron must have some news for me, or he would never have inquired if I were here."

"No mistake about that," said Mr. Gay. "Mr. Cameron is the most perfectly practical man I know. I've seen his head tried under many difficulties, and never knew him for an instant to lose—— Hallo! what's this? Heart's Content is speaking again. C—A—M, this looks like your message, Mr. Stacey."

The spot of light was already slowly traversing the screen, and the superintendent himself, not a little anxious, bent forward to translate its silent language; but now that Arthur Stacey knew that in another few moments he would learn his future fate, his energies, already so strongly taxed, seemed unequal to the occasion, and he leaned down over the mantelpiece, burying his head in his arms.

"Cameron—Heart's Content—to—Stacey — Valentia," the Slave commenced reading, when Mr. Gay motioned him to be silent, and taking a pencil and paper from his pocket, wrote off the words as they appeared upon the screen. The instant the spot of light became stationary, the superintendent wheeled round and touched Arthur on the shoulder, then immediately grasped him by the hand. "I congratulate you, Mr. Stacey," he cried, in a cheery tone, "you and the young lady. Read what Cameron says. No, you cannot, your eyes are dimmed with tears. Listen, then, while I read the message to you:

"'ALL RIGHT. E. P DIED ON DATE STATED. NEW SCHEME PLOTTED BETWEEN BOWES AND E. P.'S SISTER NOW IN NEW YORK. I HOLD PROOFS. GO HOME AND SETTLE DAY. COMING BACK BY NEXT MAIL.'"

"Ah, thank God!" cried Arthur, as the superintendent stopped reading, "this is the——" But his voice broke, and the happy tears rolled down his face.

THE END OF THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER FOR 1871.

On the 16th of December,

A NEW SERIAL STORY will be commenced in ALL THE YEAR ROUND,

To be continued from week to week until completed, entitled THE

WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

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